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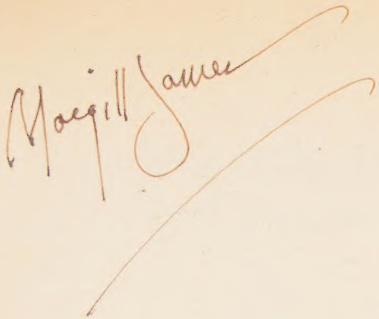

THE SCOTTISH SCHOOL OF PAINTING

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MRS. WILLIAM URQUHART
By Sir Henry Raeburn, R.A.
THE PROPERTY OF THE CORPORATION OF GLASGOW

THE SCOTTISH SCHOOL OF PAINTING

BY

WILLIAM D. McKAY, R.S.A.

LIBRARIAN TO THE ROYAL SCOTTISH ACADEMY

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PREFACE

In undertaking the preparation of a volume on the Scottish School of Painting for "The Library of Art," two courses were open. Scottish painting might either be followed in detail from George Jamesone till the present day; or, by giving its true interpretation to the phrase "school of painting," and beginning with Raeburn, attention might be concentrated on a much shorter period. A further limitation might be effected by stopping short at a date sufficiently removed from us to be free from the difficulties which attend the consideration of contemporary art.

In the main, I have adopted the latter alternative; but a glance has been taken in the preliminary chapters at the forerunners of the school, and, in the last, in a more cursory way, at its later developments. Even thus restricted, the material has been too full for the limits of a volume forming one of a series, to which it must necessarily conform; and various matters, which might very well have found a place in the art annals of the period, have not been entered on. Art-training, and the formation of the Scottish National and Municipal Collections have only been indirectly alluded to—chapter six having been so cut down as almost to belie its title—whilst from the same cause those dealing with art life in Scotland during the thirties—its relations and contrasts with that

of other countries—and about the middle of the century, have been withheld.

From the appearance of *Village Politicians* in 1806, Wilkie has enjoyed a world-wide reputation. Within the last twenty years the same may be said of Raeburn, and for about the same time contemporary Scottish painters have been favourably known in most European and American art centres; but the men who kept alive painting in the north during the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century have received scant recognition. If something has been added to what has already been done by Sir Walter Armstrong, Mr. Brydall, and one or two others, to call attention to the strong portraiture of the successors of Raeburn, and the no less remarkable figure and landscape work of the painters who continued the tradition of Wilkie and Thomson, I shall feel amply rewarded.

A professional artist, when he deals with painting, is naturally prone to dwell much on its technical aspects. I claim no exemption from this tendency; but I hope it has not been carried so far as to go beyond the interest and easy comprehension of the general reader. In the scheme adopted, biographical details have been, as much as possible, avoided, and the work, rather than the lives of the painters has been considered. A table has, however, been added as appendix, giving information as to place and date of birth and death, where the painters studied, and where they practised.

I gladly take this opportunity of thanking those to whom I have been indebted for valuable assistance in the preparation of this volume. To the Hon. Board of Manufactures and the Corporation of Glasgow, for

permission to reproduce many valuable works in the National and National Portrait Galleries of Scotland, and in the Kelvingrove Museum; to the Curators and attendants of those galleries for unfailing courtesy in supplying information concerning pictures under their charge; to the Secretary of the Albert Institute, Dundee, for facilitating access to the many works of art in Dundee and its neighbourhood; my thanks are especially due. To the Royal Company of Archers; the Merchant Company of Edinburgh; and to the Trustees of the late Patrick Allan Fraser, Hospitalfield, Arbroath, and to the Art master there; I am indebted for similar favours. I desire also to express my obligations to the numerous noblemen, ladies, and gentlemen whose collections have likewise been placed at my service, and without whose kind assistance it would have been impossible adequately to represent, or become acquainted with, the works of Scottish painters.

It may be mentioned that, to avoid the continual repetition of the full official titles, the Scottish National and National Portrait Galleries are sometimes referred to as The Mound, and the Queen Street Galleries. Similarly, the Glasgow Corporation's collection at Kelvingrove, and the National Gallery of British Art, are often called the Kelvingrove and Tate Galleries respectively.

Wm. D. McKay.

Edinburgh, *February* 28, 1906.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

That there should be within the narrow limits of Great Britain two peoples, politically welded in an incorporating union, speaking the same language, and of very much the same racial elements, but with characteristics sufficiently distinct to constitute nationality, is a fact slow to be apprehended by the world beyond. And when, as in this case, one population far outnumbers the other, the less numerous is apt to be forgotten, or regarded merely as a sub-division of the larger. So, in general literature, the term England is often held to include Scotland, and in nine cases out of ten the Scot abroad is dubbed an Englishman. What is true in the general sense applies equally to the various activities and accomplishments which have grown up and flourished amongst us.

Superficial observers have a difficulty in realising that, after two centuries of union with a much more powerful neighbour, the Scots should still retain the attributes of a nation. Yet it almost seems as if the removal of the political barrier had accentuated those attributes, so that in many departments of its corporate life the Scotland of to-day is more distinct from her southern neighbour than was the Scotland of three hundred years ago. And those who have read Sir Henry Craik's "Century of Scottish History"

will find little in it to indicate that the stream of our national life flowed less strenuously during the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century than in any former period. Like those rivers in which, we are told, the waters of tributary streams flow side by side, refusing to mingle, the currents of English and Scottish national life are still clearly distinguishable. It was not before, but long after, the union that our literature and art became genuinely Scottish.

For more than a century there has been a Scottish School of Painting, but it is only of comparatively recent years that the phrase has had any significance to the European, or even to the English art public. Beyond the frontier of our Ultima Thule, only such of our painters as had made London their home were known at all, and these, not unnaturally, were regarded as of the English school. That there should be painters of ability beyond the Tweed was hardly dreamed of, and though Raeburn exhibited in London, and was elected a member of the Royal Academy in the earlier years of last century, he was almost unknown to English connoisseurs two generations later. Redgrave, in his "Dictionary of Artists of the English School," published in 1874, after some faint commendation of his portraiture, concludes "but they were simply portraits, and do not possess any high interest as works of art." This slighting tone is no longer in vogue. For some twenty years, owing to various causes, not least to the greater frequency of International Exhibitions, and the enterprise of our younger painters in taking advantage of the opportunities these afford, the Scottish school has taken an increasingly prominent position, with the result that writers, both English and

foreign, have been led to investigate the genesis and history of Scottish art.

A distinguished painter, recently deceased, has been credited with the statement that there is no such thing as national art—that one may as well talk of national mathematics. This, like most such sayings, is in a sense true, but misleading. Art is everywhere and at all times conditioned by the same general laws and principles; but in their manifestations the Arts, unlike the exact sciences, are coloured by the temperament, beliefs, and outward environment of the peoples amongst whom they flourish. There may be no Scottish art, in the abstract, but there has certainly been, and there is to-day, a Scottish School of Painting.

To those whose temperament impels them to search into the why and wherefore of things, the various degrees in which peoples have been gifted with the art faculty and its distribution, are fruitful subjects of speculation. Sometimes the determining causes seem to lie very deep, at other times it looks as if some comparatively trivial or temporary circumstance had power to suppress, or to delay, the growth of the art instincts which, to a certain extent, are indigenous amongst all peoples. It is generally admitted that some degree of material well-being is necessary for the development of the Fine Arts. But would not one have said that the England of the later sixteenth century was ripe for that school of painting which blossomed so splendidly a hundred and fifty years later? All the conditions seemed present. Here was an old civilisation, in close proximity to countries where schools of sculpture and painting had long flourished. Their equal in material wealth, and with a literature rivalled only by that of Italy,

England had for a century been at peace internally, and then, as now, though haunted by alarms, she was secure behind her silver streak. The nobility lived in great state, many of them were men of culture, collecting pictures and other art objects, and giving employment to numerous foreign artists. One would have expected, as the outcome of all this, a native school of painting. But in art as in other things the expected does not always happen. Was it that the Reformation, or the later Puritan movement, which in Holland only gave a new direction to a school of painting already established, delayed the coming of Hogarth and Reynolds and Gainsborough? These are questions more easily asked than answered.

In regard to Scotland we are troubled with no such enigmas. The distracted condition of the country, and its dire poverty, which had increased rather than lessened during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, made the cultivation of the arts impossible. During the first half of the eighteenth century, and notably during the twenty-five years succeeding the Union, the already existing poverty was intensified by the removal of many noble families to the new centre of political power, and also by the ruin brought on such industrial enterprises as were attempting to gain a footing, by laws directed against them by English influence in Parliament. It was only after the middle of the century, when political unrest had been ended by the suppression of the last rebellion, that things began, as one might say, to look up. During its later decades prosperity increased by leaps and bounds, and with the advent of material well-being, and with a suddenness almost unexampled, there came our golden age, our national literature, and our Scottish School of Painting.

Those who have dealt with the history of Art in Scotland have usually—and rightly—harked back to the dim and distant past. Celtic art, its illuminations, sculptured stones, and metal work bring them so far. Royal and Burghal accounts yield some side lights, but the Church and the various phases of its architecture are their mainstay till Reformation times. They have had to investigate in obscure and dubious records the frail survival when the Church was no longer a friend but an enemy, finding a name here and there, sometimes native, sometimes foreign, in Aberdeen, or Edinburgh, or Stirling, to link the fifteenth century with the eighteenth. Happily our subject relieves us, in the main, from such a task ; for though there were Scottish painters, and amongst them men of ability and reputation, there was no school of painting till Raeburn and Wilkie gave it the characteristics which endure to this day. But, for the understanding and appreciation of later developments, it will be necessary to devote some attention to the forerunners of our national art.

CHAPTER II

THE FORERUNNERS. 1600–1750

Till after the first quarter of the eighteenth century these came at long intervals. The wonder is that they came at all, in a land almost destitute of examples of the painter's craft. For, whatever may have been the case under the art-loving Jameses, little seems to have survived the later decades of the sixteenth century. What fragments of pre-Reformation art were saved had either been obliterated, as in the case of the remarkable mural painting of the Crucifixion in the church of Fowlis Easter, from which the whitewash was removed so lately as 1845, or taken out of the country, like the Trinity College Church panels, now happily restored to Holyrood.

Aberdeen, which has given us so many distinguished artists, has the honour of being the cradle of Scottish painting. Though far removed, one would say, from the influences of southern culture, the northern seaport had been a centre of learning since the days of Barbour and Elphinstone, whilst its commercial relations with the Continent favoured the introduction of some knowledge of the arts. Its very distance from the Border was an advantage, in respect that it was far removed from the conditions which rendered everything unstable in the counties south of the Forth. Neither does Aberdeen

seem to have been in the forefront amongst the iconoclasts of the earlier Reformation, for we know that much of the Catholic adornment of the Church of Old Machar remained till the year 1640, when it was destroyed by order of the General Assembly, by this time inflamed with the new Puritanism of the Solemn League and Covenant. The decorations which then perished, and the wood carvings for which the city was famous, and some of which still remain, would exert some educational influence on the boyhood of our earliest painter.

George Jamesone was the son of an architect, and he is said to have been born on the day on which Queen Mary was executed, February 8, 1587. He commenced painting early in life, and had attracted considerable notice amongst his fellow townsmen before he went to Antwerp to enroll himself amongst the pupils of Rubens, then drawing to his studio the cream of the art talent of Belgium. Tradition says that he was there a fellow student of Vandyck, which enables us to fix the date approximately, as we know that the greatest of his pupils left the master's studio in 1619, when Jamesone would be about thirty. After his return to Scotland he practised for a year or two in his native city, but finally removed to Edinburgh, where he died in 1644. During his residence in the capital, as in his earlier Aberdeen period, he was kept in full employment painting many of the most prominent personages of those stormy times, Royalist and Covenanter alike*—Montrose and Argyll were of the number. Though his remuneration was small, his diligence was such that he

* In a Privy Council Register, of date 1641, the name "George Jamesone, paynter" occurs in a long list of "malcontents," *i.e.*, of those who at that time sympathised with Charles I. and not with the Covenanters.

died in considerable affluence. He is said to have painted both history and allegory, but few of his compositions in these departments have survived, and we have to judge of him by his portraits, of which happily there are many well authenticated examples in the residences of the nobility and gentry of Scotland.

Concerning John Scougal not much is known save that he had a very extensive practice, and that he died at an advanced age in 1730. Towards the close of the seventeenth century his studio was in Advocate's Close, then a fashionable part of the metropolis. In spite of his long-continued activity his works are comparatively rare. Some confusion exists as to whether there was a second artist of the name, but, on the whole, the evidence seems to be against such a supposition.

By far the most popular portrait-painter in Scotland during these times was Sir John Medina, a Fleming by birth though of Spanish parentage. Whilst practising his profession in London, whither he had removed during the reign of James II., he made the acquaintance of David, Earl of Leven, and was induced by him to visit Scotland on the promise of a number of commissions. Walpole tells that he took with him a number of bodies already painted, to which he added heads as sitters offered. Of his work there is no lack, few of the castles and mansions of the Scottish nobility being without several specimens. During the period of his artistic activity in the North he is said to have painted half the nobility of Scotland. He died in Edinburgh in 1710, but a son and grandson kept the Spanish surname associated with Scottish art till the century was far spent. Sir John's work, at its best far from

robust, often descends to a feeble and vapid imitation of Lely.

Joseph Michael Wright, though he practised mostly in England, was a Scotsman, and is said to have been a pupil of Jamesone. At an early age he went south, and soon obtained a considerable reputation as a portrait-painter. Whilst still young he lived for some time in Italy, and in 1648 he was elected a member of the Academy of St. Luke at Florence. Nearly forty years later he again visited Italy in connection with the embassy of the Earl of Castlemaine. His absence in this official or semi-official capacity seems to have been rather disastrous, for on his return to England he found that Kneller had supplanted him in public estimation, and towards the close of his life we find him applying, unsuccessfully, for the position of King's Limner for Scotland, an office which then carried with it some little emolument. Pepys speaks rather contemptuously of him, contrasting his work with that of Lely, to the disadvantage of the Scotsman, but some of his portraits, notably those of John Lacy, the actor, in three characters, at Hampton Court, and of Thomas Chiffinch, in the National Portrait Gallery, are marked by much ability.

A young Forfarshire laird, William Aikman, born in 1682, carried his enthusiasm for art so far as to sell his ancestral estate of Cairney to find the wherewithal for foreign study. After a stay of three years in Rome he paid a visit to Syria and Constantinople, returning to his native country in 1712. For some years he practised in Edinburgh, but subsequently, like so many of his compatriots of a later day, he removed to London, where he died in 1731. In both places his abilities as

an artist were recognised, and he associated on intimate terms with many of the notabilities of the reign of Queen Anne.

Jeremiah Davidson, or Davison, though of English birth was of Scottish parentage, and having accompanied his patron the Duke of Atholl to Scotland he practised for a while in Edinburgh. He was a pupil of Lely, and his work has sometimes been confused with that of Aikman, but it lacks the verve and artistic quality to which the latter frequently attains. Besides the portraits of the Duke and Duchess of Atholl, he painted Frederick, Prince of Wales, in 1730, and a full length of Admiral Byng.

The names of several Scottish painters of the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries have come down to us, but they are little more than names, and have hardly any bearing on our subject. Thomas Murray, William Ferguson, John Smibert, John Alexander, and the Norics are of the number. Some of them worked mostly abroad or in the sister kingdom: the two James Norics were decorative painters in Edinburgh, and seem also to have practised landscape-painting. Their names, and that of John Alexander, appear in the list of the founders of the Academy of St. Luke, an association modelled on that of Rome and other Continental cities, which we find established in Edinburgh in the year 1729, and the subsequent history of which is obscure.

Of the artists whose careers ended, or were drawing to a close before 1750, Jamesone, Scougal, and Aikman may be taken as representative Scottish painters of the seventeenth and earlier eighteenth centuries; and, as such, their work deserves some attention. Of the three, it was, perhaps, inevitable, owing to his early date and the

numerous works attributed to him, that most consideration should have been given to Jamesone. In the preceding remarks the traditional view of Walpole and Cunningham in regard to his Flemish training has been adhered to. In quite recent times this view has been strongly upheld by his townsman, John Bulloch, in his exhaustive and interesting work, "George Jamesone, the Scottish Vandyck." No positive evidence is adduced, and the case seems to rest entirely on oral tradition. Such is not to be set aside lightly; but, under the circumstances, it is natural to ask, what is the evidence afforded by his style and methods? An examination of the well-authenticated and typical portraits in the collection of Mr. Erskine Murray will suffice for this purpose.

Of these, that of Lady Mary Erskine—Countess successively of Marischal and Panmure—is undoubtedly the best. Mr. Bulloch says of it, "This is probably the finest portrait of Jamesone extant." One can feel at a glance the difference between this fine untouched example and the bedaubed and painty works often shown as specimens of our earliest painter. It is a quiet and reticent presentment of a lady no longer young, though comely still and of a pleasant countenance. The flesh is delicately modelled, with rather more shadow than usual in his female portraits, and with an impasto nowhere heavy—of a creamy white, toned with age, and harmoniously blended with the auburn hair and dark background. From the soft half-tones of the flesh the brown eyes tell finely, and the mouth has, in a modified degree, the artist's mannerism, being slightly crescent-shaped. In the shadows the pigment is thin, with an underlying ruddy tone. The dress of dark green, brocaded with

gold, the puffed sleeves, and collar of fluted lace are painted with care and precision, though without the force and delicacy of his Flemish contemporaries. The same qualities characterise the portraits of her three sister countesses. Of the male portraits it may be said generally that they are darker in tone, though the subjects are of the ruddy, fair type. The shadows of the flesh are warmer, and the hair—tending to auburn at times—is painted in transparent umbers. The same general characteristics may be seen in the bust portrait of a man in armour at Yester House, dated 1644, the year of the artist's death.

There is little, it must be confessed, in these canvases to suggest the studio of Rubens. Nay, it is impossible to think of the painter of those portraits of Scottish knights and gentlewomen with their set pose and timid handling, taking part in such work as, for instance, the Medici series in the Louvre, or others known to have been executed mostly by his scholars. This has been a puzzle to those who have accepted the tradition. Cunningham says: "Were it not settled to a certainty that he studied under Rubens, I confess I should have set it down that he had taken Hans Holbein, or some of the old religious painters, for his model"; and though Sir Walter Armstrong detects "a manner in which the paint is put on thinly," which he attributes to Flemish influence, both he and other critics are compelled to admit that much of Jamesone's work is opaque and heavy handed. Other considerations tend to throw doubt on the story, not least the great difficulty of getting admission to Rubens's studio. "He had been forced," he tells us, "to refuse a hundred persons who had been obliged to go to other painters, amongst them several

LADY MARY ERSKINE

By George Jamesone

THE PROPERTY OF A. ERSKINE MURRAY, ESQ.

who had been recommended by his own family and friends." That there is a something Flemish, both in the thin ruddy shadows of the flesh and in his manner of treating the hair, may be conceded. The whole matter is obscure ; nor is there much likelihood, at this time of day, of its being made clearer. Having regard to the persistent tradition, the probability is that Jamesone had been to Antwerp, where he had seen, and perhaps copied, the works of Rubens. That he had for some years been under his direct tuition, as the tradition has it, seems very unlikely. Our Scottish Vandyck would surely have made more of so great a privilege.

The works of Scougal are less numerous. In the Scottish National Gallery there is a bust portrait of himself, rather under life size, representing a man of about thirty-five, dark-haired, and of swarthy complexion. It does not possess much technical ability, but the painter appears to more advantage in a portrait of Sir Roger Hog, Lord Harcarse, in the Parliament Hall. Here the face is strongly modelled in pretty full impasto ; there is little shadow, but the arrangement of light and dark is well managed, and the lace work of the bands daintily touched. Of much the same quality are the portraits of Sir Archibald Primrose, and those of Sir John Clerk, first baronet, and his wife, Elizabeth Henderson, at Penicuik. In all these there is a careful modelling, with no attempt at an artistic treatment of light and shade, and they all want that lightness of touch which can give charm and *esprit* to the most conventional arrangements.

Considering his short working life of under twenty years the works of William Aikman are numerous. Redgrave describes them as " weak but pleasing, not showing much

original invention." The latter part of the phrase is only too true, but it applies to British portraiture of the period rather than to Aikman specially. Though the terms "weak but pleasing" may be accepted in regard to the general run of his work, the description is certainly inadequate when applied to such portraits as those of himself in the National, and National Portrait Galleries of Scotland, and that of William, Fourth Marquis of Lothian, at Newbattle. The two former are bust portraits, the latter something between that and a half length. All three are in painted ovals—the fashion of the time. The portrait in the National Gallery represents a man of about thirty-five, of refined and intellectual cast of countenance, in brownish yellow costume, with the wig of the period. It is painted with great skill; the handling is painter-like, easy yet reticent, and the modelling admirably expressed. Fairly fresh in colour, a finely descriptive touch, notably in the management of the crisp higher lights of flesh and drapery, gives vivacity to the whole. Though there is no "original invention," this portrait has neither the dulness nor the spurious glitter which characterise so much of the painting of the time. Placed as it is between fine specimens of Raeburn and Watson Gordon, it suffers little by comparison. At the National Portrait Gallery the likeness seems that of a younger man; the arrangement and costume are somewhat similar, with the exception that an outer garment of neutral blue, with puce lining, is folded over a coat of old gold. The Newbattle picture differs considerably from these two portraits of himself. It is less conventional in treatment, having a richer and more luminous colour wrought with a fuller brush. Besides the portrait mentioned above, there are several Aikmans

in the Queen Street Gallery, portraits of the poets Ramsay, Thomson, and Gay, amongst the number. Examples of his work may also be seen in the Parliament Hall, at Amisfield House, and in various other collections in Edinburgh and the neighbourhood. Of the more important commissions executed during his eight years in London we know little north of the Tweed. At the time of his death he was engaged on a large picture of the Royal family in three compartments. The last, containing a portrait of the King, was left unfinished. It is said to be now in the collection of the Duke of Devonshire. Aikman at his best was a capable craftsman, but, in common with the painters of his time, he lacked the strength of character to substitute an outlook of his own for the conventions by which he was surrounded.* The awakening was not yet.

Of contemporary Scots painters who practised beyond our borders, only Joseph Michael Wright need be further noticed. In point of time he forms a link between Jamesone and Aikman, and he may quite well have been a pupil of the former, as is said, in his youth. His work shows little affinity with that of the Aberdonian, but his early removal to London and the subsequent years spent in Italy sufficiently account for that. In his rather chequered career he never attained to a foremost place amongst painters, falling always under the shadow of abler, or at least more popular, men. First Lely and then Kneller had the cream of the practice, and the Scotsman had to be content with the crumbs which fell from the table of the foreigners. Thus we read of his painting for the Corporation of London

* Aikman's portrait is in the Gallery at the Uffizi set apart for Portraits of Painters.

the portraits of the Judges, now at the Guildhall, which Lely refused to paint unless they would sit at his studio. It must be conceded that there is little trace, either in these Guildhall full lengths, or in his work at Hampton Court and the National Portrait Gallery, of the facility and fluency of handling which form part of the equipment of the fashionable portrait-painter. But the very absence of these qualities with which the accomplished Germans weary us in their countless square yards of portraiture adds an attraction to Wright's less pretentious canvases. The Hampton Court picture of John Lacy, the actor, in three different characters, is a work of much ability, altogether devoid of the mannerisms of the period. Its low tone and want of fluency impart a something of heaviness and monotony; but, in compensation, there is an individual outlook on nature rarely found during the hundred years which separate Vandyck from Hogarth.

Of Wright's works in the National Portrait Gallery that of *Thomas Chiffinch*, Keeper of the King's Jewels during the reign of Charles II., is the best, and, being free from the eccentricities incident to the Hampton Court picture, it affords a better test of his abilities as a portrait-painter. The fine features are carefully modelled, the half-tones well gradated, and the quality of the flesh is softer and more flexible than usual. And here, at least, the costume and accessories are rendered with a freedom quite unusual in his work. Pepys records his impressions of a visit to Wright's studio after having been to Lely's, with a "Lord, what a difference!" Before this portrait of Chiffinch, with many examples of the fashionable painter in its immediate vicinity, one is inclined to agree with him, but to ask—is it not the other way about?

CHAPTER III

LATER EIGHTEENTH CENTURY PAINTERS

The Academy of St. Luke, formed in Edinburgh in 1729 by a number of gentlemen, lay and professional, though short-lived, gave an impetus to art in Scotland, as did the more ambitious venture of the brothers Foulis in Glasgow some quarter of a century later. The famous printers and booksellers were the first to associate the western city with the Fine Arts, establishing an Academy there in 1753, partly in connection with their business, but also for the study and encouragement of the arts generally. To this end they brought together a considerable collection of pictures, and secured the services of foreign professors of painting, sculpture, and engraving. The rather Quixotic establishment of the patriotic brothers early involved them in financial difficulties, but their enthusiasm enabled them to carry it on for over twenty years. The Academy was broken up and the collection dispersed about 1775, but during its existence several artists prominent in the later part of the century had received in it their preliminary training.

A pupil of the earlier institution, Allan Ramsay, son of the author of "The Gentle Shepherd," was the first Scottish painter who had a conspicuous success in London. Conforming to the fashion of the time, he set out for

"the seat of the beast" beyond the Alps—as his father puts it in a letter to his friend Smibert—about 1736. He remained in Italy three years studying successively under Solimene and Imperiali. During these years he acquired a taste for antiquarian and classical lore, which subsequent visits developed to the disadvantage of his art. He became an accomplished linguist, speaking most European languages; he wielded the pen as well as the brush, writing with vigour and facility on various subjects, and entering with spirit into the public controversies of the time. Amongst his correspondents were Voltaire and Rousseau, with both of whom he had become acquainted abroad. In London he lived in great style, was a favourite at court—where his knowledge of German stood him in good stead—and had many friends amongst the leading men of the day. We are told by Allan Cunningham that Lord Bute, the Duke of Newcastle, Lord Bath, Lord Chesterfield, and the Duke of Richmond in particular were frequently at his house, and that, more, it was said, on matters connected with politics than painting. Under such a plethora of culture and social distractions it is little wonder that Ramsay's art faculty remained a stunted growth.

His works are numerous, few family mansions in Scotland being without one or two specimens. Though the average of merit is not high, his portraits are often placed on the canvas with great skill, and especially in his busts and half-lengths of ladies, sympathetically and elegantly drawn and modelled. In the latter he has a pleasing way of placing the figure in profile and showing the face at the three-quarter angle, thereby imparting a Watteau-like grace to the lines of neck and shoulders. The elegance

THE PAINTER'S WIFE

By Allan Ramsay

IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF SCOTLAND

of the costume of the period, with its combinations of filmy lace and delicate hues, adds a further resemblance to the Frenchman. But here the likeness ends; for Ramsay's colour is, as a rule, opaque and heavy, and his work lacks both breadth and atmosphere. The want of vigour of handling and of any well-conceived scheme of light and shade gives undue prominence to the linear design or contour, and as that is often feeble, much of his work is un-painterlike. But there are not wanting indications in some of his earlier works that he might have risen to higher things. The portrait of his wife, in the Scottish National Gallery, is of singular charm, strangely contradicting the defects and conventions of his average work. Here the arrangement is easy, the gesture and expression animated, the light and shade well conceived and appropriate. There is nothing of the cameo-like setting of figure against background, or over-rigidity of contour, which characterise so many of his productions. Rather, in avoiding these, he has gone too far, for the crisp touch and keen accent are what one desiderates most in this softly and sweetly modelled face and tastefully costumed figure. If to the ease and grace and vivacity with which the hazel-eyed young matron is here depicted he had gone on to add the more robust qualities which experience should have brought, Ramsay might have been a not unworthy third to his two great English contemporaries. But it was not to be, and a full generation had yet to pass before Scotland produced an artist worthy of being named with Reynolds and Gainsborough. Several other portraits might be cited in evidence of the painter's capacity, that of *Lady Glenorchy* * at

* In the possession of Lord Torphichen.

Calder House, for instance, and his chalk drawings furnish various examples of that elegance of design which so charmed Northcote in his profile of Queen Charlotte. Cultured gentleman, court painter, and universal favourite as he was, he remained a mediocre artist. To begin with, he had a promising individuality of outlook. In presence of the portrait of his wife and others of his earlier days, one feels that the tradition of Lely and Kneller, which held Aikman in thrall, is a thing of the past. But Ramsay neglected his craft, and deficiency in this respect has been fatal to his continued reputation as a painter.

Of the pupils of the Foulis Academy Alexander Runciman was the first to distinguish himself. He had previously had some instruction from the Nories, from whom he may have caught his early enthusiasm for landscape. When about thirty he visited Rome, where he made the acquaintance of Fuseli. Being of similar temperament the acqaintance ripened into a friendship which, no doubt, had an effect on his future career. Henceforth he devoted himself to the almost impossible field—so far as Scotland was concerned — of historical painting, but his appointment to the Mastership of the Trustees' Academy in 1771 enabled him to devote himself to his ideals. Inspired by memories of the Sistine Chapel and enthusiasm for the poetry of Ossian then agitating the literary world, Runciman painted for Sir John Clerk —surely the Mæcenas of Scottish Art—a series of Ossianic subjects for the cupola of the great hall at Penicuik House. This, which he regarded as his *magnum opus*, was destroyed by fire some years ago, and it is now difficult to form an estimate of his powers in that direction, his work in our public collections being

smaller in scale and of a less ambitious order. In the curious portrait group of *Alexander Runciman and John Brown** by themselves, the former is seen in profile, seated, with palette and port-crayon ready. He is somewhat fantastically dressed in a green striped dressing gown and high scarlet cap touched with gold braiding. The face has little direct shadow, is well modelled in rather thin material, and the fine brown eyes are deftly touched and full of character.

In a side chapel of St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church—formerly Episcopal—in the Cowgate, there are four panels by Alexander Runciman: two of upright oval form represent *Moses* and *Elias*, the others are oblong—about five feet by two—the subjects being *Christ and the Woman of Samaria* and *The Father Receiving the Prodigal Son*. The last-named subject is especially interesting, seeing that the Prodigal in it is represented by the ill-starred Robert Fergusson, the precursor of Burns. The Prophets are of the size of life, and are seated in attitudes which recall the Sistine Chapel. In the Prodigal the pale up-turned face of Fergusson is seen in profile. The Father bends to meet him and stretches over him a protecting hand. There is a tradition that Runciman painted also a foreshortened *Ascension* on the inside of the dome which at one time rose above this chapel, but, if it still exists, a new ceiling has shut it off from view for over half a century.

Of his younger brother John, who died at the early age of twenty-four, our National collection contains specimens which give the impression of a more robust talent than can be claimed for Alexander. The three

* In the Scottish National Portrait Gallery.

small canvases *The Flight into Egypt*, *Christ and His Disciples on the Road to Emmaus*, and *The Temptation* indicate a curious individuality. In treatment they are reminiscent of some of the early sixteenth century Flemings, who in their rendering of such incidents of the sacred narrative gave considerable prominence to the landscape. These pictures indicate a weird and lively fancy, which in a more important canvas, *King Lear*, borders on imaginative power. The group of the mad King and his attendants—rather flimsily painted—serves only to give one or two more positive colour-notes in the confusion of sea and sky and shore by which they are surrounded. The scheme of umber, amber, and indigo in which the fantastic scene is wrought recalls certain landscapes of Rembrandt's. Rembrandtish, too, in its conception is the remarkable design for *Belshazzar's Feast* at Penicuik House. In this sketch—for it is little more—the tumultuous conception is rendered in that luminous scheme, with local colour not too pronounced, so characteristic of the Dutch master. The detail of features and costume is, in parts, touched with daintiness and precision, elsewhere it is vague and slight. But with much that is immature, both in handling and light and shade, this little canvas, more, perhaps, than any other, suggests the measure to which John Runciman might have attained. The young artist destroyed the bulk of his work before his death, but enough has been left to give him an honourable place amongst Scottish painters of his time.

David Allan, though he never attained to much proficiency in his craft, was the first to break ground in a department which, within half a century in the hands of Wilkie, was to form a corner-stone of Scottish painting.

He was a pupil of the Glasgow Academy, and afterwards spent ten or twelve years in Rome. This probation, far from confirming him in the Roman ideals, seems to have awakened him to the futility of the classicism then fashionable. That he had made some progress on the conventional path may be gathered from his picture, *The Origin of Painting*, in the Scottish National Gallery. This small oval, of simple and elegant design and telling chiaroscuro, is well known through Cunego's engraving. It gained for him the gold medal of St. Luke's Academy, Rome; and one might have predicted from it a successful career in such subjects, which were then much sought after, both as pictures and for mural decorations. But Allan was not one of the strong personalities who take fortune at the flood. He had a glimpse of something different, and it is to his credit that he followed the light that was vouchsafed him. On his return to Scotland he devoted himself—not to *high art* like Runciman—but to the observation and delineation of the pastoral life of his own country. As there was no demand for paintings of this nature he made drawings, which he etched, of various incidents of humble life and from the songs and ballads, both humorous and pathetic, in which Scottish literature is so rich. The most widely known are a series of designs from "The Gentle Shepherd," at that time and for long afterwards, the staple of the secular reading of the Scottish peasantry. These drawings are not of a high order. The action and character are often rendered with considerable spirit, but the design is feeble and scattered, and the drawing uncouth and amateurish. Indeed, it is difficult to understand how one who had attained to such a degree of proficiency in these directions as is indicated in *The Origin*

of Painting failed so utterly to give evidence of them in the work which was most congenial to him. They are chiefly valuable as a record of the costume and general environment of Scottish rural life of the period, and for a certain spirit with which the artist enters into the scene delineated. Nevertheless, because of the initiative he took in breaking away from classic conventions, David Allan remains a personality in the evolution of Scottish painting.

Contemporary with these were several whose working lives were spent mainly in Italy and other European countries. The career of one of them, Cunningham, is involved in some obscurity. After completing his studies in Italy, he worked successively in St. Petersburg and Berlin. In the latter capital he is said to have attracted the favourable notice of Frederick William II., as his subjects dealt chiefly with Prussian history, and especially with the battles of Frederick the Great. The names of Jacob More and Gavin Hamilton are better known. More had been apprenticed to the Nories, and by them he had been initiated into the practice of landscape, which, unlike Runciman, he never forsook. For over twenty years he practised this department of art with great success in Rome, assisting in the decorations of the Villa Borghese, and executing many important commissions, through which he accumulated a considerable fortune. In 1787 Goethe, then enamoured of art and artists, was taken by Angelica Kauffmann to More's studio, and was impressed by his works. He speaks specially of one, *The Deluge*, as being highly original in conception, and of "a splendidly beautiful *Morning*." Alas, for the great poet's opinion on art! More's landscapes are little removed from the decorative work which

was common at the time. They have all the conventions of the classic compositions of the period, with little of the simplicity and distinction by which such works are often redeemed in the hands of capable craftsmen. Neither can a set of his drawings in the Laing bequest at the Scottish Academy be said to give one a more favourable impression of the Scoto-Roman landscapist.*

In the more ambitious walks of history and mythology Hamilton was the counterpart of More. A pupil of Agostino Masucci, he was early fascinated with Rome and the classicism of which it was the centre. His art proclivities lay all in that direction, as may be learned from the titles of his works—*Agrippina Weeping over the Ashes of Germanicus*, *Heralds Leading Briseis from the Tent of Achilles*, *The Death of Lucretia*, &c. Like More he had a hand in the decoration of Prince Borghese's villa, in one of the rooms of which he illustrated the story of Paris. He lived in great style, "maintaining," says Brydall, "much of the dignity and state of the great old Italian masters." During the rare visits he paid to Scotland he painted several portraits, and it is mainly from these that his qualifications as a painter have now to be determined. The group at the Scottish Portrait Gallery is historically interesting as containing, besides the eighth Duke of Hamilton, his tutor—Carlyle's "witty Dr. Moore of Glasgow" and his son, the future hero of Corunna; but there is little to recommend it to those who attach value to the painter's craft. Executed in a touch monotonously soft,

* More is one of the four Scotsmen whose likenesses are in the gallery at the Uffizi set apart for "Portraits of Painters." H. W. Williams in his "Travels in Italy, Greece, and the Ionian Islands," speaks of it as that of a rather silly-looking person.

it is unpleasantly warm in the shadows and poor in its quality of grays. Nor could anything else be looked for, as it was part of the classic faith to depreciate everything but form and design. The profile of *Hamilton of Bangour* shows the artist in his classic vein ; the low square-cut vest, the toga-like arrangement of the red robe, and the fillet-bound hair match well with the medallion-like setting of the head against the background. Colour and brush-work are both feeble, but are less missed here than in the portrait group.

Sir George Chalmers, Martin, Willison, Donaldson, and Skirving are names associated with Scottish portraiture during the latter half of the eighteenth century. The last named only survived well into the nineteenth, and he is the only one of whom it can be said that his practice was entirely north of the Tweed. He was a son of the stalwart East Lothian farmer, who is said to have written "Hey, Johnnie Cope," and who certainly wrote the less known, but still more humorous, ballad of "Tranent Muir," which brought him the challenge he treated so lightly from one of Sir John's officers. The artist, to judge from George Watson's portraits of him, seems to have inherited some of his father's fine physique, and he is remembered as much for his eccentric habits as for his art. He began work as a painter of miniatures, but after his return from Italy, which he visited rather late in life, he devoted himself almost entirely to pastel. His oil portraits of his father and of *Dr. Alexander Carlyle* ("Jupiter") at the Scottish Portrait Gallery, are more interesting from the personal than from the artistic point of view. That of himself in pastel shows a young man of handsome type, smartly attired in coat of bluish-grey, and low-crowned black beaver, which shadows

the face to the eyes. The material suits him better than the oil, and here he handles it freely both in face and costume. The professional lives of the others were only partly spent in Scotland. Of Donaldson we read that he had what would now be called socialistic notions, which led him to look on his art with contempt. George Willison had considerable capacity. His seated half-length of Beugo, at the Portrait Gallery, though slight and rather thin, is the work of an expert brushman. A larger work in the Albert Institute, Dundee, is painted with a fuller brush, and both there, and in a small head of Romney,* he shows technical ability of no mean order. He worked for some years in India, but later resumed practice in Edinburgh, where he died in 1797. David Martin had been one of Ramsay's assistants. His average work is mediocre, but now and again he shows himself a fairly competent craftsman, as witness one or two canvases in the Queen Street Galleries, and at the Archer's Hall.

A word may be added concerning two lady artists. Miss Ann Forbes was a grand-daughter of William Aikman. Her work is scarce; a portrait of the *Duke of Queensberry* at Penicuik House does not rise above mediocrity. Miss Katherine Read, daughter of a Forfarshire gentleman of good family and Jacobite leanings, is said, at the time of the Rebellion, to have painted portraits of Isabella Lumisden and her brother Andrew, afterwards secretary to the exiled Prince. Some five or six years later she studied in Paris and in Italy. Smollett, Hayley, and Fanny Burney speak of her crayon portraits with enthusiasm. After having painted most of the notabilities of her day, Miss Read, in 1775, went to India, then a happy hunting-ground

* In the possession of Mrs. Glassford Bell, Edinburgh.

for such artists as were prepared to risk the voyage and the climate. The latter especially was a serious consideration, and it proved so in this case, for after a year or two's residence, Miss Read fell ill, and died on her homeward voyage on December 15, 1778.

Many of these precursors of Scottish painting were men of varied accomplishments, and some had attained to considerable skill in their craft, but they lack those characteristics in common which would entitle us to regard them as forming a school. The majority, indeed, might have been omitted, so far as their bearing on the present subject is concerned, had it not been necessary to show that the raw material was abundant. After Jamesone's time the abler men worked mostly in England or abroad, where they naturally fell under the influence of whatever style was in vogue for the time being; whilst to those who remained north of the Tweed conditions were anything but inspiring. Allan and the elder Runciman only, amongst the latter, ventured beyond the *rôle* of the conventional portrait, and that with indifferent success. Landscape in the tentative efforts of the Nories and De la Cour was but an echo of the classic mural decoration of Roman villas and French châteaux. In all branches painters were influenced rather by the general trend of European art than by each other. Ramsay owes nothing to Aikman or Scougal, just as the Runcimans have nothing in common with David Allan and little with each other. One thing only Scottish painters from the days of Wright and Aikman had in common, the Roman apprenticeship. A glance at the condition of painting beyond the Alps during those times will be neither uninteresting nor irrelevant, and may explain much.

The fascination exerted by Italy on those of the painter's

craft is coeval with the revival of art in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. If, somewhat later, Italy turned to Flanders and the new processes of the Van Eycks, it was only for a moment. Ere the sixteenth century was well on its way, Dürer, Mabuse, and Van Orley were across the Alps; so great, indeed, was the attraction of this golden age of southern art, that before long we have in Belgium a school of painters known as the Italianised Flemings. Holland soon followed in the person of Antonio Moro, a forerunner of the numerous Dutchmen who, a hundred years later, made Rome their headquarters. Indeed, it was during that second efflorescence of which the later Carracci, Poussin, Claude, and Salvator Rosa were the leading spirits that the attractive power of Italy became, as one might say, magnetic, and some years study there was regarded as a *sine qua non* of the artist's education. From that date onward, Rome had its colonies of artists from most European countries. The influence of the Renaissance which had so powerfully affected the greater masters tended more and more to exalt the traditions of the ancients. Painters like Poussin and Claude lived in, and have bequeathed to us, a charming Arcadian world, frankly pagan; but on their descendants who had to execute the commissions of the Church the loss of the earnest and devout spirit of the earlier times was nothing less than disastrous. It is pitiful to read of the long succession of the uninspired who during the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were entrusted with such commissions. Thrice pitiful is it to think that to such a source painters from all lands came for instruction.

Come they did, nevertheless, Michael Wright and William Aikman being amongst the earliest from these

islands. When the former had first known Rome, the Poussins, Claude, and Salvator Rosa were still in their prime, and the immediate successors of the Carracci were at work under the direction of Bernini, executing the princely commissions of Pope Innocent and his cardinals. Ere the date of his second visit Colbert had established the French Academy, and Carlo Maratta was leading a revival of painting based on the study of Raphael, "without losing sight of the Carracci and Guido."* During Aikman's student years, 1707-12, Maratta was still living, though in extreme old age, and his influence dominant. The young Scotsman may, at times, have attended the French Academy, now one of the established institutions of Rome, for we are told that students of other nationalities were welcomed at the Capranica Palace. Several other Scottish painters worked in Italy about the same time, and would share the same influences as Aikman, but their work is little known amongst us, and their associations with the country of their birth were of the slightest.

Before the next group of our painters comes on the scene a new influence had begun to make itself felt in the art world. The ideas propounded in some of the writings of Shaftesbury, and in a treatise concerning Beauty, Order, Harmony and Design,† by Professor Hutcheson of Glasgow, had led on some quarter of a century later to the works of Winckelmann, Lessing, and others, the builders of the Æsthetic Philosophy. Æsthetics is a department of

* Lanzi, v. ii, p. 279. History of Painting in Italy. London, 1828.

† Hutcheson on Beauty, Harmony, &c., is one of the list of volumes the sorely bestead Andrew Lumisden—Prince Charles Edward's private Secretary—asks his sister, the future wife of Sir Robert Strange, to orward to him at Rouen, where he had taken refuge with other Jacobites.—Letter of Andrew Lumisden, Nov. 26, 1747, N.S.

knowledge deeply interesting as determining the relation of the Fine Arts to other spheres of mental activity, but it has always been perilous stuff for the professional artist to meddle with. Unfortunately, the most prominent Roman painter of the day—Raphael Mengs—could not let it alone, and the lesser lights followed in his train. The trend of the new philosophy was to make painting more hidebound than ever. Raphael and the ancients was the burden of their song, or rather of their long-winded and metaphysical speculations. It was to an æsthetic symposium, such as is revealed in Goethe's "Letters from Italy," more than to a school of painting that our later eighteenth century artists came, and it is not wonderful that whilst their intellectual culture was widened, they learned little of their craft. With Tiepolo and Guardi the neglected tradition of the great Venetians was expiring on the Adriatic. From masters such as Masucci, Solimene, and Imperiali our Hamiltons, Ramsays, and Runcimans could gather little more than the minimum of skill necessary for the conventional history and portrait painting of the day. David Allan's common sense had wearied of it; but it needed a stronger than he to shake off the long-established incubus of classicism. In 1785 the predestined man was already amongst them in the person of Henry Raeburn.

CHAPTER IV

RAEBURN. 1756–1823

In the foregoing chapters a *résumé* has been given of the work of various Scottish painters who practised their art from the earlier decades of the seventeenth till nearly the close of the eighteenth century. They are not very numerous, considering the length of time, but the country was unable to support even these few, and, like the scholars of a still earlier date, our painters had to find employment in England or abroad. It is not surprising that, under such circumstances, painting remained something of an exotic in Scotland during this long period. By the great bulk of the people it was altogether ignored; and even by many having some claim to culture it was looked on with suspicion, as a mystery brought from far lands to administer to the vanities or the hobbies of the great. It reflected nothing of the struggles and aspirations through which our country passed during the dolorous or stirring times of the Covenant, the Union, and the Jacobite rebellions. Men's minds were set on other problems, nor was there within our borders the minimum even of that material well-being indispensable for the cultivation of the Fine Arts.

To those who live in times when fresh problems and new outlooks on nature follow each other thick and fast, and

when the technique of art seems revolutionised with every succeeding decade, it seems strange that the painters of those days should have followed, and with such ardour, ideals from which the study of nature was almost excluded. Such was really the effect of the teaching of Winckelmann and Mengs, and, in the Rome of 1785, their authority was hardly questioned. It is always difficult to break with long established conventions. This is no less the case in the sphere of Art than of Religion or Politics, and our indebtedness to those who have first trodden new paths in any department of human knowledge can hardly be over-estimated. It is undoubtedly to the strong and original personality of Henry Raeburn that we owe the existence of a Scottish School of Painting.

The causes which underlie new movements are always obscure. Such changes are generally the summing up by some masterful individual of what has been "in the air" for some time. The genesis of the Scottish School is especially difficult to diagnose, owing to Raeburn's having left almost no notes of his professional career or his art preferences. The times, no doubt, were ripe for change, and though in high places the classic ideals still held sway, there had been revolts both in England and France. In the former, Hogarth and Gainsborough had boldly cut themselves adrift from conventional notions; and if Reynolds, judged by his "Discourses," still held by tradition, his practice did not always correspond with his theory. In France, Watteau, and later, Greuze and Chardin had responded to French views of life on its frivolous, homely, and sentimental sides. But what of this handsome young man from Scotland—surely the Ultima Thule of art in

those days? What would be the result of the "worship of Michael Angelo" prescribed for him by Sir Joshua? Would he return north conformed to the Italian type as so many of his countrymen had done, or had he the grit in him for something better?

In his native country it was a time of rapid change and development. The long stagnation which had followed "the killing times," and the feeling akin to despair engendered by a reluctantly accepted Union, had lifted shortly after the '45. Folks began to realise the blessings of a settled government, and the possibilities of well-being by which they were surrounded. Slowly at first, but with increasing momentum as the century drew to its close, the nation set itself to make up leeway. It is unnecessary to repeat the story of those times as it has been preserved for us in many interesting records both contemporary and more recent. With almost startling rapidity the material resources of the country were developed. Thousands, reared in straitened circumstances, found themselves well-to-do agriculturists, prosperous tradesmen, or even affluent merchants before they were well past middle life. Fortunately there were elements which kept the country from becoming engrossed in the merely material. The ardours and impassioned regrets of a lost cause, in which half the community had been more or less implicated, and with which more than half sympathised, were powerful checks on that "lust of gain" to which nations as well as individuals are prone. Seldom, indeed, have the romantic and prosaic elements of life been brought closer than in the Scotland of those days. It is hard to realise that even a quarter of a century after Raeburn's visit to Rome Scott could sing:

"Yet live there still who can remember well
How when a mountain chief his bugle blew,
Both field and forest, dingle, cliff, and dell,
And solitary heath the signal knew."

As a youth our painter must have known some who could remember the Scottish Parliament, who could discuss "Mar's Year" and the Porteous Mob from personal recollection, and to whom the '45 was a recent event. Here at last was some approach to the ideal conditions so long wanting. Literature and Science had kept pace with the material development of the country, and towards the end of the century were represented, in their various departments, by men of wide culture and even of European reputation. The learned professions contained quite an unusual number of practitioners of strong character and commanding personality. These, with a still resident gentry of sharply divided political views, formed a society which, with its picturesque setting, has been delineated for us, and for all time, by its own master spirit. It would have been nothing less than a national calamity if such a generation had passed away without some worthy pictorial record. This was averted by the timely appearance of Raeburn, and a recent author* has well remarked that "it is difficult to say which was the more fortunate, the sitters who had such a superb artist to paint them, or the artist who had such admirable figures to copy."

Descended from an old Border family, Raeburn, who early lost both parents, was brought up till of school age by a brother twelve years his senior. Like many other sons of burgesses in similar circumstances, he received his

* "Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century." By H. G. Graham.

education at Heriot's Hospital, after which, about 1771, he was apprenticed to James Gilliland, a goldsmith in Parliament Close. Whilst there, Mr. David Deuchar, seal engraver and etcher, who had frequent occasion to see Gilliland on matters of business, took a liking to the young apprentice, then a tall handsome lad of engaging manners. Finding him one day gazing intently into a small mirror, "Hullo, Henry," said he, "are you admiring your good looks?" "No," said the boy, "but I am trying to draw a likeness of myself," and he presented a sheet of paper on which he had made a very creditable portrait of himself in pencil. The upshot of the incident was that, through Mr. Deuchar's good offices, young Raeburn, while nominally continuing his apprenticeship, was allowed time for study, and after some tentative efforts in the direction of miniature-painting, he was introduced to Martin, then the fashionable portrait-painter of the Scottish metropolis, with a view to instruction in oil-painting. Martin has already been introduced to the reader. According to Cunningham, Ramsay took him to Rome, when he was acting as the latter's assistant, to astonish the Italians with his skill in drawing. Whatever his ability may have been at that time, the treadmill of Ramsay's studio work seems to have left him destitute of any freshness of perception, and when one thinks of the scores of copies of bedizened royal and other personages he and Reinagle had to supply during their master's long absences in Rome, it is not to wondered at. He rarely rises above the feebly respectable, and to-day, what reputation he has, he owes to his association with Raeburn.

Raeburn knew little of the struggle which generally attends the outset of the painter's professional career.

Brought up in fairly comfortable circumstances, he found patrons almost from the beginning, and, before he had well entered his twenties, marriage with a wealthy widow made him independent of his earnings. A dangerous position, one would say, for the budding artist, but it does not seem to have damped the ardour of Raeburn, who, all through life, was pursued by the passion of industry. He had to pick up the elements of his craft in a somewhat haphazard fashion. Training school there was none in the Edinburgh of his day, for it was only from the appointment of John Graham as master in 1798 that the Trustees' Academy assumed the position of an Art School in the sense of imparting instruction to painters. Nor, with the exception of Martin's, was there any studio where, in accordance with immemorial usage, he could learn from the example of an accredited master. Some arrangement of the sort seems to have been attempted with Martin, but there early occurred a hitch which threw the young artist on his own resources, probably to his ultimate advantage. With the precocity of genius, Raeburn had already assimilated all that Martin could give, and henceforth we can trace through a series of works, the dates of which are at least approximately known, his gradual advance from the state of pupilage to the comparative facility he had attained when he crossed the Alps.

A full length of *George Chalmers of Pittencrieff*, painted in 1776, is the earliest work of which the date is certainly known; but nowhere can one better follow the artist's development during the first fifteen years of his professional career than in the series of pictures at Raith. The earliest of these, a somewhat ambitious group of *Mrs. Wm. Ferguson and Children* with a landscape background was painted

about 1780. That of *Wm. Ferguson and his third Son* seems of slightly later date, and the *Major Buchanan* may also have been painted before the Roman visit—1785-7. Then we have the well-known oval of the boy, *Wm. Ferguson of Kilrie*, which Sir Walter Armstrong thinks prior to the half-lengths of *Sir Ronald and Robert Ferguson practising Archery*, of date 1790. The full length of *General Sir Ronald*, in sportsman's dress, comes two years later, and lastly, so far as this earlier period is concerned, there is the equestrian portrait of *Sir Ronald* painted in 1795. As these are typical pictures of their respective dates, a glance at the qualities they reveal will carry us to the beginning of what may be called the artist's middle period.

Returning to the pre-Roman pictures, and remembering that they are the work of one who but lately had been a painter of miniatures, the technique is surprising. In adopting the stronger medium Raeburn seems to have broken, once and for ever, with the softness and stipple of the ivory tablet. Already, both in the full length of *Mrs. Ferguson and her Children*, and in the three-quarter length of her husband and their third son, we have a manner of seeing and painting unlike that of any of his Scottish forerunners. In these earliest canvases one finds the direct painting, the broad flat surfaces and the precise square touch—afterwards such a weapon for the seizure of character—in the management of the narrow shadows and the modelling of the features. As yet he avoids effects, and what of light and dark the pictures have comes rather from the opposition of local colours, and the setting of the subject in its surroundings than from that learned use of chiaroscuro which stood him in such stead

in after years. Thus, in the more ambitious group we have the broad light mass of the white-robed lady and girl opposed to the brown costume of the boy, the black retriever, and the deep umbers of foliage and foreground. In the other, Mr. Ferguson is relieved against a shadowed breadth of leafage, whilst the boy tells dark against the sky and landscape distance. Raeburn's methods have never much of the mysterious; for well-nigh half a century one can read his manner like a clear handwriting over the twilled canvas he uses from first to last. Here it is quite simple; in faces and costume alike there is that tendency to generalise which became later so marked a characteristic. The broad lights and half-tones of the flesh are brushed in with a pigment somewhat wanting in body, and a handling which lacks as yet the vivacity which can save this almost shadowless treatment from tameness. The darker markings of the features and the folds and overlappings of the dresses are often superimposed, instead of being a substratum as with Wilkie and his followers. The want of the finer shades of modelling gives to the large spaces of the costumes, and even to the flat planes of the flesh a feeling of emptiness, and the scumbles by which he tries to give variety to the former too obviously show their intention.

Little is known of his Roman experience. His visit, of some eighteen months, coincided with that of Goethe; but the "Letters from Italy," while they extol the classic painting of Jacob More, make no mention of his greater countryman. They may have met, for the art community of Rome, which the poet affected during his residence there, could not have been large: but to Goethe, brimming over with æsthetic theories, the realistic tendencies

of the young Scotsman would hardly prove attractive. Raeburn had the advantage of the friendship of two compatriots who had been long resident in Rome, Gavin Hamilton, already known to the reader, and James Byres, of Tonley, in Aberdeenshire, an architect and archæologist. It was to the latter that he owed the advice never to paint anything without having the object before him. Strange words for the time and place, and to which the painter used to acknowledge himself deeply indebted. It seems one of those happy sayings falling on fruitful soil, which give the bent to a lifetime and direction to future generations. It recalls the saying of the Devonian Gandy to Reynolds, that a picture should have a richness in its texture as if the colours had been composed of cream or cream cheese, to which the great President owed, perhaps, as much as to his beloved Michael Angelo.

In 1787 Raeburn is back in Edinburgh, where for six and thirty years he held undisputed sway as a painter of portraits, making his own and all succeeding generations of Scotsmen his debtors for the work he so quietly accomplished during those eventful years of our national history.

To return to the pictures at Raith, and first to that of *William Ferguson of Kilrie*, which was probably painted within a year or eighteen months of his return to Scotland, the first thing that strikes one is that here we have Raeburn experimenting with an effect, the face in broad shadow with cheek and nose catching the light from behind. The touch is fuller and the pigment more juicy than in the pre-Roman portraits, but he has not yet attained to all the skill necessary for this treatment. The indication of eyes and mouth within the shadow

lacks something of subtlety, and the transition from light to shadow has hardly the naturalness he afterwards reaches in the portrait of his son on the grey pony. There is in it a something of Greuze as well as of the stronger masters, but the interest attaching to new departures and the winsome expression of the languorous eyes and slightly parted lips combine to give it a unique place in the painter's earlier work. One regrets that Raeburn did not oftener make use of this arrangement, so fascinating from an artistic point of view; but the shadowed countenance does not commend itself to sitters. Rembrandt's partiality for it cost him his practice as a portraitist, and, unlike the Dutchman, Raeburn was no dreamer.

In the half lengths of *Sir Ronald and Robert Ferguson practising Archery* we return, as one might say, to the artist's normal development, for this quaintly conceived and entirely unconventional picture is, as regards technique, only a more forcible restatement of the manner of the two earlier canvases. The advance here is the abandonment of those set arrangements into which painters—and especially portrait-painters—are so apt to fall; and the effort to grapple with the figure set simply against a background of sky is indicative of the open mind and innocent eye which have so much to do with what we call originality. The portrait of *General Sir Ronald Ferguson*, in sportsman's costume, painted two years later, though more conventional in arrangement, shows great advance in technical skill. Both face and figure are modelled with a fuller brush and more graphic touch. There is less of the flatness of the mosaic, and the accessories are executed with the increasing ease and fluency which come of

experience. Three years later the General is again depicted in one of Raeburn's earliest equestrian portraits. Is there again an advance? At all events, there is a change. The laird of Tonley's advice is bringing new effects to the cognisance of the painter, and here, in place of sharp contrasts, he adopts the broader and more subtle treatment of bringing light against light, the fresh complexioned face, powdered hair, and grey riding coat forming a delicate harmony with the silvery sky.

A review of Raeburn's earlier practice has been given in some detail, because it concerns not himself only, but marks the rise of a school which thenceforth takes a unique, if not a very prominent, place in European art. The Raith pictures have been made use of, as exhibiting specimens of various dates so placed as to be easily compared or contrasted; but the same development can be traced in such characteristic portraits as *Bailie Galloway*,* *Principal Robertson*,† and *Mrs. Macqueen*,‡ of the years immediately succeeding his return to Scotland, the three-quarter lengths of *Mrs. Newbigging*,§ of *Mrs. Campbell of Ballicmore*,‖ the half-lengths of *Dr.* and *Mrs. Wood*,¶ and in various portraits of the Gibson-Carmichael family.

Raeburn was now verging on forty. Few great artists have entered their fifth decade without having accomplished part of the work on which their fame has ultimately rested. Nor was it otherwise with the Scottish

* In the possession of the Merchant Company, Edinburgh.
† In the University, Edinburgh.
‡ In the possession of Kenneth MacKenzie, Esq., of Dolphinton.
§ In the possession of Mrs. Rainy.
‖ In the National Gallery, Edinburgh.
¶ In the possession of Dr. Wood, Edinburgh.

painter, for within the last four years he had painted *Dr. Nathaniel Spens* and *Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster*, either of which can take rank with the great portraits of any age or school. To most painters there come occasions when all of knowledge they have acquired flows from them in a white heat of strenuous effort. Something congenial in the subject, some happy combination of circumstances, brings all their experience to bear effectively, and, as if on some seventh wave of inspiration, they are borne far beyond their previous attainments. Such an occasion came to Raeburn when, in 1791, he was commissioned by the Royal Company of Archers to paint Dr. Spens.* The painter was an adept at archery, and, as he faced the firm-set figure of this athletic bowman, he doubtless felt within his own frame all the tension of the moment he has chosen to depict. In a portrait it is always a risk to select an attitude or expression which can only be momentary: the result here is a triumph. The perfect calm of the figure, just swayed from the perpendicular, communicates itself to the spectator, and we wait for the flight of the arrow, already drawn to the tip, with no sense of the irritation such pictorial representations are apt to provoke. Clad in the picturesque costume then worn by the Royal Body Guard, Spens—seen full face—is set against the painter's conventional landscape with, for this special occasion, the national symbol, erect and prickly, in the foreground. The composition is admirably balanced by the not too obvious diagonal line of the tree stem.

Examined more closely, the picture is found to include, alike in arrangement and execution, all, and more than all, of the best we have seen in the works already passed under

* In the Archers' Hall, Edinburgh.

review. The main light—the white expanse of waistcoat and breeches—is no longer surrounded with dark umbers and strong contrasts of local colour, but is carried upwards through cross belts and silver trappings to the sun-tanned face and gloved hands which form the secondary lights, whilst the neutral tones of the tartan carry the eye through russet foliage to the sky and distance. The face, low toned by comparison and ruddy cheeked, is modelled with a skill and precision which summarise the gathered knowledge of fifteen years. In this masterly study of a countenance, fixed for the moment in all its lineaments, nothing is omitted, nothing overstated. The firmly compressed lips and wide open eyes intent on the forthcoming arrow flight, betoken the marksman's nerve and the centre of the gold. A film of shade from the bow-string crosses the cheek, the crisp shadow under the tightly-drawn cap gives keenness to the glance, whilst the reticent modelling of cheek and chin unite the more vividly marked features with the silver grey of the hair. The very adjuncts of bow and arrow, in their unswerving certainty of line and absolute rightness of curve, add to the impression produced by this great creation.

Some critics, Sir Walter Armstrong and Mr. Pinnington amongst the number, place the *Sir John Sinclair* on a still higher level, and it may be conceded that the four or five years which separate the two works have added power to the elbow of the painter. "By dint of consummate skill, admirable technique, and sheer audacity," to quote the last-named author, he has successfully grappled with the difficulties of a costume which verges on the ridiculous. The attribute of "good taste" omitted from the quotation, is more doubtful. Speaking from recollection of the

DR. NATHANAEL SPENS

By Sir Henry Raeburn, R.A

THE PROPERTY OF THE ROYAL COMPANY OF ARCHERS, EDINBURGH

picture as it appeared at the Glasgow International of 1901, the riot of colours, and the incongruity of the elements of which the dress is made up—an inconceivable combination of Highland chief and regimental officer—bulk too large in the sum total of the impression produced. Like *The Macnab*, of which Lawrence is reported to have said that it was the best representation of a human being he had ever seen, it is a marvellous *tour de force*, but the something of reticence is wanting which gives dignity to the *Spens*. Long years have yet to elapse ere Raeburn gives us in *Glengarry* a consummate presentment of the ideal Highland chief.

For the next twelve or fourteen years one can trace through numerous portraits, both male and female, the artist's gradually maturing powers. The thin, somewhat starved pigment, and whitish or hectic tones of the *Mrs. Newbigging* and *Mrs. Campbell of Ballemore*, are replaced by a more generous material, a fuller blooded flesh and a greater breadth of shadow. The brushing becomes more fused, and in such works as *Mrs. John Hope** and *Mrs. Cruikshanks*† better expresses the modelling both of face and figure, carrying with it something of the mystery with which nature veils her transitions. The latter portrait has a piquancy of character which is quite delightful. The same general trend is visible in his male portraiture from that of his son Harry on the gray pony, of 1796, to the *Dr. Alexander Adam* of 1808, to name two masterpieces of the respective dates. In the former‡ he returns to the effect of light he had experimented with some half-dozen years earlier in the *William Ferguson of Kilrie*, but

* In the possession of Sir Henry Cook.

† In the possession of Arthur Sanderson, Esq., Edinburgh.

‡ In the possession of Lord Rosebery.

with vastly increased knowledge. He has gone a long way beyond the Raith picture in this masterly study of broad shadow and reflected light. The full length of *Rolland of Gask* in the National Gallery of Scotland, *Lord Chief Baron Montgomery* at Kinross House, and the equestrian portrait of *Professor Wilson* in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, of the years from 1800 to 1805, lead on to the *Dr. Alexander Adam*,* which may be said to stand on the threshold of the artist's greatest period. In this simple and charming presentment of the Scottish Arnold, as he has been called, we have, perhaps, the finest example of Raeburn's power of generalising. In face and figure alike everything has been analysed, and with masterly synthesis placed on the canvas *d'un seul jet*. The kindly nature and the teacher's gift are at once conveyed to us in expression and gesture, rendered by the simplest arrangement and technique. The dress is dark throughout, and the formality of the buttoned coat is relieved only by the loose folds of the academic gown; the left hand holds a small volume closed over the forefinger, the right being outstretched, palm downwards, as if expounding some passage from the classics. The whole is relieved against a finely gradated olive background. There is neither strong contrast of lighting nor bravura of handling; all is broad, simple, and appropriate. The finely lit, full complexioned face, accented by a touch of pure white in the neckcloth, tells for the most part as a warmer against a cooler light, and is united with the strongly illumined hands by the sheeny surfaces of silk and broadcloth.

Raeburn was now approaching the zenith of his powers,

* In the National Gallery of Scotland.

and the great studio he had had constructed in York Place was thronged with sitters representing the rank, the beauty, and the talent of Scotland, with occasionally a stray client from the south. During these later years we have glimpses of the painter and of his family life, of his hobbies and amusements, all tending to raise him in our estimation ; but of his art life, alas ! there is no record, and the sequence of his works, when not revealed by some side light, has to be guessed at by the internal evidence of style. Were his leading pictures gathered together in some great gallery for a few weeks, it might not be very difficult to determine their dates approximately, for seldom has an artist's technique shown a growth so gradual and uninterrupted. But, scattered as they are over the length and breadth of Scotland, and seen under varying conditions of light and surroundings, it is impossible to do even this much ; and in a carefully compiled catalogue of works, which has been drawn up by Mr. Caw, of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, only a hundred and fifty out of seven hundred and one enumerated have a date annexed. So that one has to be content, in most instances, to speak of periods rather than of years. From the painting of Dr. Adam, there yet remained to Raeburn some fifteen years, which one may well call "crowded years of glorious life" to change slightly Scott's well-known line, for the bulk of his greater achievements belong to this later period. In a work not dealing specially with Raeburn, one can only select some of the more outstanding, and so follow a development which, in his case, continued almost to the end. In *Dr. Alexander Adam* and *Lord Newton* of the Scottish National Gallery —which may have been almost contemporary—he has

reached his zenith so far as grasp of character is concerned. In the latter—widely known through Turner's mezzotint —Raeburn has immortalised for us a typical senator of the Scottish College of Justice, as portrayed in sundry memorials of the period. But all written descriptions pale before this triumph of the brush which keeps the man in his bodily presence before us after the lapse of nearly a century. The painting is as concise and summary as that of *Dr. Adam*, and has an added virility which suits the subject. The coarse features, the flabby flesh, and the small peering eyes, which earned for him the name of "the Sleepy Judge," are delineated with a minimum of brushstrokes; and if in the broader planes of cheek, brow, and chin there is a hint of the careful fusion which came later, the painter has compensated himself by such a bravura of handling in the reds of the official robe as at once sobers the vivacity of the modelling and the full-blooded complexion. But, in common with *Dr. Adam* and other works of this date, there is here a rather unpleasant juxtaposition of the yellows and reds of the flesh. Neither are of a very fine quality. It looks as if, in getting rid of the slaty grays of his first period, he had gone too far, and eliminated them altogether. It is accordingly in the gradual acquisition of those transition tones which give bloom and subtlety to the countenance, and in the enrichment of his scheme of chiaroscuro that Raeburn's future development consists. If, in the former direction he never quite reaches the standard of the great colourists, he goes far beyond his earlier practice, whilst in his adaptations of the latter, and in much that pertains to the incidence of light, he sometimes anticipates qualities that are considered quite modern, as did Velasquez in

a more consistent way nearly two hundred years earlier. In the Scottish painter this is best seen where he discards the conventional landscape background, and paints his subject with the environment in which he posed to him.

No better instance of what is meant can be given than the full-length portrait of *Colonel Alastair Macdonell of Glengarry* in the Scottish National Gallery, and, for the purpose, it has this additional advantage that in its present position it has as pendant another masterly full-length, painted probably a year or two later—*Major William Clunes*. Macdonell, said to be the prototype of the Fergus McIvor of *Waverley*, stands as he might have posed to the artist in his own hall, with an arrangement of target and crossed broadswords and other Highland trophies on the wall behind. Major Clunes, as fine a specimen of the British officer as Macdonell is of the Highland chief, is depicted with his charger, against the conventional background of sombre trees and cloudy sky. As regards technique, both pictures take rank with Raeburn's greatest achievements; the *Clunes* is more of a *tour de force*. The vivacity with which the fine head, in full light, the brilliant scarlet of the uniform, the trappings and military accoutrements of man and horse are brushed in, the daring juxtaposition of contrasted tones and colours in the central passage of the picture, and the skill with which these are carried off in the glossy hide of the restive bay horse, and the sombre but resonant hues of sky and foliage, make this picture a treat to all who can appreciate the alchemy of the brush. We accept it, as we accept the great bulk of the portraiture of the time, as an arrangement in which a studio-lit figure is set against a landscape which has little

in common with what sky and woodland present to our modern eyes. Most of the great masterpieces of the past have been so composed. A portrait by Vandyck, a figure picture by Titian, or even a landscape by Gainsborough, takes little account of an element in nature which has come to bulk more and more largely in recent times—that element of atmosphere which the late R. A. M. Stevenson has somewhere called the "third dimension." Atmosphere, in this sense, signifies the ether which enfolds the nearest as well as the farthest off objects, which comes between the portrait-painter and his sitter, as between the landscapist and the distant range of mountains. In the Parisian studios of to-day, the theory of tones or values which arises out of the recognition of this all-pervading element, has been reduced to a system, so that the merest tyro gets, with the accurate arrangement of a few tones, a coherence in his work unknown to many accomplished masters of the past. It is a powerful auxiliary, and it has been largely responsible for recent changes in technique, but, like everything else in the field of art which can be reduced to a system, its dangers are almost as great as its advantages. A few there were, however, to whom the values and the tonalities, to use the studio terms, came not as a cut and dry system, but by reason of a native insight, and just because of this, that aspect of their work is never obtrusive. Velasquez is the great example of this prevision of the modern way of seeing; it is found also in the little Dutch masters, Terburg, de Hooch, Vermeer, and others, and one recognises something akin to it, after a century and a half, in Raeburn. Both Mr. Stevenson and Sir Walter Armstrong have laid stress on the likeness of the Scotsman's

methods to those taught in the studio of Carolus Duran in the painting of a head; and the analogy is only less applicable to his treatment of the *ensemble*, because of the artificial arrangements he so often adopted in obedience to custom, and against his own better judgment as he somewhere tells us. The *Glengarry*, as the most notable example known to the writer of that simpler treatment which allows free play to the artist's recognition of "the third dimension," deserves special attention.

It would be interesting to know, were there any means of getting at the facts,* whether this portrait was painted under the usual conditions in the artist's studio. A comparison with the run of his work leads one to doubt it, for some of his mannerisms are absent, notably those which arise from the constant use of a very high light. Here the fall of the shadows indicates a side light. This, taken in connection with the nature of the background, suggests that it may have been painted in the chieftain's own hall, or in some similar place easier of access. Such conditions would be ideal to one of Raeburn's instincts, and to some such circumstances may be owing the qualities which differentiate this portrait from the bulk of his work. The *Glengarry* was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1812, and would in all likelihood be painted shortly before that date. It is thus a product of that phase of the artist's work when he had added to his square touch the fusion of surface which preceded the "smear with the blurred edge" of his latest stage. The subject was inspiring; Macdonell was, one may say, the last representative of his order, and the artist has risen to the occasion. The Colonel is attired as chief of his clan, and this dress, with

* Note A.

all its elaborate appointments, he wears with a simple dignity very unlike *The Macnab*, or *Sinclair of Ulbster;* partly, no doubt, because it was his habitual garb, but mostly because of the masterly treatment adopted by the artist. For Raeburn knows now the significance of Reynolds's reply to the question how he overcame the difficulties of modern costume—"Have not all these light and shadow?" He has placed the athletic Highlander, of the fair blue-eyed type, at such an angle that his "tartan array" with its disconcerting accoutrements of sword, dirk, and philabeg are to a great extent swallowed up in broad shadow. Grasping a matchlock by the muzzle with extended right hand, he turns, with somewhat haughty mien, to face the light, which comes from a direction quite unusual in Raeburn's later practice, just such as an ordinary window would give. That its source is close can be seen from the strong shadows, and its level incidence gives him the opportunity of painting the eyes in full light. In his usual practice, the eyebrows, the lids, and the overlapping flesh at the outer angles, cast strong and decisive shadows, often to the extent of giving a lack-lustre appearance to the eyes themselves. Here all is different, and, to the writer at least, there is nothing finer in the master's achievement than the play of light across the steel blue eyes of this gallant chieftain. Only half-tones are used, but they are used with consummate knowledge and intimacy of observation. The painting of the eyes has been mentioned, because it presents the most obvious contrast to the artist's usual treatment; but the picture is all of a piece, the same level light floods the fair complexion, making all horizontal markings more delicate, and the gradations of rounded cheek and chin more subtle; its

impalpable influence harmonises the red and yellow elements of the flesh, which in *Lord Newton* and *Dr. Adam* lack these finer transitions. The warmth of the ear, the yellow hair, and the downy whisker are rather felt than realised, the shadow of the nose only comes strong and trenchant in this arrangement of sanguine hues, and softly modulated half-tones. The warm light of the face is repeated on the right hand and bare knee, and these primary and secondary lights are united by the glint of various adornments, and the lighter surfaces of waistcoat and philabeg. The pose is dignified, the inclosing line of the plaid, and the breadth of light and shade, imparting simplicity to a costume not easily amenable to artistic treatment. The drawing is everywhere firm and accurate—mark the decisive contour of the extended right arm—whilst in regard to chiaroscuro it has few equals in modern portraiture. The chieftain is set against a background, one should rather say in an environment, of tones, luminous above and sombre below. His shadow falls on the wall behind, the bareness of which is relieved by a flat pilaster, and trophies of hunting horn, targe, and broadswords.

The distinguishing feature of the picture is the justness of its tonality. Compared with the surrounding portraits—and they are no mean rivals—it seems positively to swim in a bath of atmosphere. Glengarry keeps well within his frame; nor is this effected by depressing the tones—the picture is luminous beyond most—but by the rightness of the relations. Nowhere is salience sought for by forcing, an expedient which only defeats its own end. After studying this portrait for a while, let any one turn to Gainsborough's *Mrs. Graham* opposite, and the difference will at once be felt. Both are masterpieces, but the

Scottish painter has realised the elements of atmosphere and incidence of light in a way the other has never dreamt of. Mark how the luminous flesh comes against the background in either picture. One can feel round *Glengarry's* cheek to the atmosphere beyond ; not so in the other case, where a somewhat forced dark follows the contour. This does not imply that Raeburn's picture is the greater, only that it has that quality of "keeping" which the other wants. Observe how the point of the sword sheath, seen behind the chieftain's knee, detaches itself from the background, though the difference in tone is almost impalpable. What a temptation to relieve it by some glint of light ; but no, like everything else here, it keeps its place by virtue of a justness of values that no modern could better.

This portrait has been dwelt on at length, on its merits certainly, but also because it has been so strangely overlooked by recent writers on Raeburn. Mr. Pinnington makes no allusion to it, and Sir Walter Armstrong only to contrast it with *The Macnab* and the "amazing" *Sinclair*. There may not be such palpable feats of brushwork as characterise the painting of those earlier portraits, but surely there is a strength in its reticence which goes beyond either. One can only suggest as a reason for the neglect of this unique page of Raeburn's career, its having been for years relegated to the portrait line in the Scottish National Gallery. Happily it is now restored to the line.

Shortly after the exhibition of *Glengarry* Raeburn was elected Associate, and in 1815 to the full membership of the Royal Academy. The honour came unsolicited, and the likelihood is that Colonel Alastair's portrait had not a little to do with the election. One can hardly conceive of a body of artists overlooking the claims of such a work.

COLONEL ALASTAIR MACDONELL OF GLENGARRY
By Sir Henry Raeburn, R.A.
THE PROPERTY OF JOHN CUNINGHAME, ESQ., OF BALGOWNIE
IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF SCOTLAND

The explanation suggested by more than one writer, that Raeburn's talent was only recognised after the Academicians had satisfied themselves that he had no intention of settling in London, can hardly be seriously entertained.

The ten years of active life remaining to the artist were signalised by many notable triumphs. Whether or not his visit to London in 1810, and the fuller opportunity thus afforded of seeing the productions of the masters of contemporary English portraiture, had much influence on the Scottish painter's subsequent work is a matter of minor importance. From none of them had he much to learn; but, naturally, he would see also some of the works of their two great predecessors, and the gradual enrichment of his impasto, and the increased suavity of his touch, has more in it of Reynolds's "creamy" consistency of pigment than of either Hoppner or Lawrence. Numerous instances might be dwelt on, but so far as male portraiture is concerned, it is sufficient to mention the *James Wardrop of Torbanehill*, the *John Wauchope*, and the half-length of himself in the Scottish National Gallery, his Diploma picture—the *Boy and Rabbit*, of date 1821—the equestrian portraits of *Sir David Baird*, *Lord Hopetoun*, and the *Marquis of Tweeddale*, the *Robert Ferguson of Raith* and the bust portrait of *Sir Walter Scott*. The two latter are amongst the last of the painter's works. In the first mentioned, which must also belong to his last lustre, this grand old man, who lived to see his hundredth year, must have been well up in the eighties when the portrait was painted. The treatment is exceedingly simple. The massive, square-built face, worn with age, and sunken in the lines about the mouth, is seen at the three-quarter angle and under the usual studio conditions.

This incidence of the light fuses into one mass the expanse of brow and the scanty silver hair, and spreads a lesser illumination on the finely modelled surfaces of cheek and chin. The eyes, which droop at the outer angle, are deep set, and tell dark by reason of their treatment rather than from their local colour. Their shadowed orbs are the most strongly accented of the features, and their decisive markings are echoed in the modelling of the lower parts of the face. A close-buttoned coat of dark material is relieved by the brilliant white of the neckcloth, and the whole is set against the simple background which the painter more and more affected towards the end. In technique there is little trace of the bravura he uses with such effect in some portraits not far removed from it in point of time. Unlike most Raeburns, it shows signs of repeated workings; it is also pitched in a lower key, Rembrandtish and golden. His own portrait, 1815, is one of his most brilliant, giving us the man as described by a sitter when, hand on chin, he contemplated his subject before putting brush to canvas. In the *Wauchope* the flesh is rather unpleasant, both in tone and quality, and here, as in other examples which might be named, the fuller impasto and more complete fusion seem to be accompanied with a loss of some of the artist's finer characteristics. The smear with the blurred edge does not always suit his genius.

There remains to be considered the female portraiture of these later years. Some have maintained that Raeburn was *par excellence* a painter of men, and certainly his robust style seems to qualify him better for dealing with the sterner sex. But when one comes to review his work there seems little ground for the assertion. It is true a

collection of Raeburn's portraits of women would not present such a succession of visions of loveliness as would those of Reynolds or Gainsborough. On this point, Sir Walter Armstrong remarks that pretty faces were not so common north of the Tweed as in England. This is an explanation which no Scotsman will accept, especially in view of the fact that Gainsborough's *Mrs. Graham* "la plus séduisante de toutes les ladies Anglaise, après Miss Nelly O'Brien," * was a Cathcart, and Sir Joshua's *Graces decorating a Figure of Hymen* were Montgomeries. A more likely explanation is suggested by Mr. Pinnington in his interesting chapter on Raeburn as a painter of women, one which must have occurred to most who have given any attention to the subject, viz., that the English masters conform their sitters, especially their female sitters, to a type. Their women have not sufficient individuality to convince one of the likeness. Apart from this internal evidence, it is well known that Reynolds's portraits, at all events, were far from giving satisfaction, even when folks were less fastidious about likeness than in these later photographic times. There is the story of the painter turning his deaf ear to the old lady who bluntly asserted that one of his portraits wasn't like; and Wilkie quotes Hoppner to the effect that "he wondered how Reynolds could send home some of his portraits: they were absolutely unlike." This aspect of English eighteenth century portraiture has led the Hon. Mr. Collier to ask if none of their innumerable female sitters were broad-shouldered, if none of them had big, firm mouths and square jaws. A quite unnecessary question in the case of the Scottish painter. But one who has

* Les Trésors d'Art en Angleterre. Bürger, 1860, p. 390.

given us *Mrs. Houston of Clerkington*, *Lady Steuart of Coltness*, *Mrs. John Hope*, *Mrs. Scott Moncrieff*, *Lady Montgomery*, the golden-haired *Mrs. Campbell of Hallyards*, and the *Misses Suttie* can hardly be charged with failure in the delineation of beauty.

The *Mrs. Hamilton* of the Scottish National Gallery, and the *Lady Montgomery* * at Kinross House, are typical full-lengths of about the year 1810. The former, as it is now placed, has to compete with the charms of Gainsborough's masterpiece. This juxtaposition shows how the painters of the early nineteenth century were handicapped in regard to costume, compared with those a generation earlier. This low-cut, short-waisted dress, with its plain length of skirt, makes a poor show beside the rococo adornments of looped satin and quilted petticoat which the English painter has rendered so superbly. Mrs. Hamilton has no pretension to beauty; but with all these disadvantages she stands the test bravely; and if, as a harmonious arrangement of line and colour, the palm must be awarded to her fascinating rival, there is a virility in the flesh painting of the other which contrasts not unfavourably with the somewhat waxen hues in the face and hands of Mrs. Graham. The *Lady Montgomery*, on the other hand, shows that no change of fashion can hide the charms of a pretty face and a graceful figure. In this case, Raeburn has placed his sitter almost in profile. Standing on a flight of low steps the lady leans an elbow on the terrace wall behind, and turns her dark eyes on us with a pleasant smile. The arrangement, both of line and colour, is happier than in the *Mrs. Hamilton*, and there is a more elegant distribution of light and shade. The pose is graceful and the expression sprightly, added to

* In the possession of Sir Basil Montgomery, Bart.

which it has all the technical qualities of the master, now nearing the meridian of his powers. The flesh, full and pulpy, goes well with the creamy tones of the dress, which contrast favourably with the slaty colour Raeburn sometimes uses in his white draperies. The half-length of *Mrs. James Campbell* is, as regards handling, the feminine analogue of *Lord Newton*. Judged by its style, it may have been painted a year or two later. Here Raeburn has placed on the canvas one of those old ladies, survivals of an earlier generation, of whom one reads in countless memoirs, and who seem almost as historic as their male compeers. The strong mobile features, alert and instinct with genial character, are rendered with a gusto which Hals himself has never excelled. It may be called the high-water-mark of the artist's accomplishment in that direction. Like many of the works of the Dutch artist, it has been painted in a white heat, almost in a fury, one would say. The scheme is simple; the face inclosed by the white breadths of cap and kerchief, and a red shawl folded about the arms and hands, are the elements of the picture. The background is dark, everything being sacrificed to concentration of effect. But it is questionable if here, as in some other instances, the painter has not overshot the mark, and whether the picture would not have gained by the introduction of something in the nature of a secondary light, such as a skilful treatment of the hands might have supplied. The glint of light on the broidered edges of the shawl seems barely adequate for the purpose.

But in female portraiture it is to the portrayal of the softer charms of youth and earlier middle-age one instinctively turns, and, happily, there are many examples of Raeburn's excellence in this direction also. They are not

all beauties, nor does he seek to prettify those to whom nature has denied the gift. But what a fine presentment of the average well-favoured womanhood of our country he has left us in such portraits as *Mrs. Cruikshanks, Mrs. George Kinnear*, *Mrs. McCall*, and many others. The first-named lady inclines to stoutness, but with what a delightfully piquant expression she regards us, as she leans back in her arm-chair. Though comparatively young, her face is as full of character as that of Mrs. James Campbell herself; she may develop into just such an old lady. The *Mrs. George Kinnear* * is one of the artist's triumphs. With black lace shawl drawn about her shoulders, and seated in a garden-chair, this buxom matron leans back in a setting of sombre foliage, and with a slight turn of the supple neck, looks, not at, but to the right of the spectator. Her clustered locks are of a golden brown, the eyes deep hazel. The flesh, wrought with the suavity of touch and unity of surface of his happiest moments, is remarkable for the quality of its greys, whilst, as regards dainty modelling of the features, this example yields to none. The crossed arms are strangely low-toned—to the extent, indeed, of forming an enigma in the composition. This notwithstanding, its rare combination of qualities entitles it to a high place amongst the artist's achievements.

The *Mrs. Scott Moncrieff*, which bears the impress of a still later date, is too well known to require description. It has the simple background of his latest phase, whilst the soft glow and creamy surface of the pigment approximate it to the ideal embodied in Gandy's words to Reynolds. These qualities are shared by the *Mrs. McCall* †

* In the possession of Lord Kinnear.

† In the possession of Thomas Denroche-Smith, Esq.

MRS. KINNEAR

By Sir Henry Raeburn, R.A.

The property of Lord Kinnear

and by the seated three-quarter length of *Mrs. Campbell of Hallyards*,* which seems to be of about the same date. The latter is pitched in a mellow key, somewhat lighter than the others. There is less shadow than usual, and this treatment suits well the type of the sitter, a blue-eyed blonde. The beautiful face, which has all the charm associated with the complexion, is set against a background of warm tones and these harmonise finely with the fair flesh and clustered curls of one of the most lovely of Raeburn's creations.

In considering the Scottish painter's place in art, one or two things must be kept in mind. First, he was of the comparatively few very capable men who have devoted themselves entirely to portraiture. The great Venetians, Velasquez, Rembrandt, Vandyck, to name only a few amongst the earlier schools, exercised their talent in various directions. The same holds good in more recent times. Reynolds and Gainsborough in the eighteenth, Millais and Watts in the nineteenth century, are instances. This versatility undoubtedly marks the highest order of genius; it seems as if the imaginative faculty, exploring every outlet, gathered strength from the scope of its activities. This highest rank can hardly be claimed for Raeburn; he belongs rather to the more restricted order of Moro, Moroni, and Hals. Again, he differs from the great portraitists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in that he is not the outcome of a long line of able predecessors. Such forerunners as he had in his own country had, one may say, no influence on him. He was the founder, as well as the greatest exponent of his school, and this must count in weighing his genius with that of others. The

* In the possession of A. R. Don, Esq., Broughty Ferry.

distinction is to some extent shared by the two great English painters who preceded him by a generation; though, in their case, the English practice of Vandyck and his followers, Lely and Kneller, supplied more of a pedigree than did Aikman, Medina, and Ramsay to Raeburn. Nevertheless, it is with Reynolds and Gainsborough that we naturally compare him.

In thinking of their respective work as a whole, it cannot be denied that there is an element of the bald and prosaic in Raeburn compared with the English masters. The infinite tenderness of Sir Joshua's *Heads of Angels* and *Penelope Boothby;* the consummate grace of some of Gainsborough's masterpieces, one looks for in vain. On the technical side, also, one misses the charm that comes from a variety and complexity of brushwork and handling which was hardly compatible with the Scotsman's direct methods, and this, as has been remarked, is emphasised by the severe simplicity of the costume with which he had to deal. Is it fanciful to think that the difference has something akin to the differences of the countries, and that each suits its environment? Students of *Les Maîtres d'Autrefois* will recall how its accomplished author, comparing a Veronese with a Rubens in the Brussels Gallery, comes to the conclusion that the Venetian master looks best in Venice and the Fleming in the Low Countries. In like manner, one can hardly fancy Raeburn's *clientèle* treated by either of the English masters without the loss of something characteristic of their country. For if his direct painting lacks the fascination of the more complex processes, as a vehicle for the seizure of character it is infinitely superior, enabling the painter to embody at once the impressions which are apt to evaporate in the

more dilatory methods. Where character counted for so much as amongst Raeburn's sitters, it is difficult to overrate this advantage. It is due also to his simpler methods that, where ordinary care has been taken, with few exceptions, the Scottish master's works are in such excellent condition; and it would have been well for his successors if they had paid more heed to his practice in this respect. Comparing the technique of a picture like *Glengarry* with some manifestations of more recent painting, one is surprised at its fineness and evenness of surface. Nowadays many seem to model in pigment rather than to paint; one can recall instances where, even on canvases of very small dimensions, the depth of paint can be measured by the half-inch. How different in this great full length. Raeburn did not use the transparent shadows of Wilkie and his followers; but his material, taken all over, is hardly thicker. Here, as in his work generally, the darker surfaces are composed of underlying umbers with superimposed brushings of no great weight in the figure, and scumbles of lesser consistency in the more vague spaces of the background. And even in the lights the impasto is moderate, nowhere is there any loading in the modern sense of the word; and it cannot be doubted that to this simplicity of method the fine preservation of the picture is, to a great extent, due. There is hardly a flaw on the surface of *Glengarry*, and the same may be said of its neighbours *Dr. Adam*, *Major Clunes*, and *Mrs. Hamilton*. Well may the author* quoted above ask whence modern painters have derived their liking for a heavy impasto and clotted surfaces. It is, indeed, difficult to see what purpose is served by such overloading,

* Eugène Fromentin.

or who is the better for it, except the artist's colour-man.

Raeburn can hardly be called a colourist in the highest sense of the word, for it is neither by the charm of their colour-schemes, nor by the quality of the colour itself, that his works primarily attract us. In regard to the latter he does not always very finely observe a rule to which all the great colourists conform, viz., that colour should undergo all the changes of light and shade without losing any of its constituent qualities, so that the lights and darks may be, as has been said, "of one family."* In his draperies and accessories, and even in the darker shadows of the flesh, he seems sometimes to lose touch with the local colour. But, taken as a whole, his finer works hold their own alongside even the greatest colourists, for, in lieu of the full charm of colour arrangement, and the subtle qualities of more complex processes, his pigment has the freshness and vivacity of direct application. There is none of the deadness and opacity of a material fumbled and overwrought.

But that which gives the distinctive note to his work, when compared with that of contemporary and immediately preceding English masters, is its modernity, and this, as has been hinted, comes largely from that prevision of the "third dimension"—to use again Mr. Stevenson's term—which he shares with Velasquez and one or two other seventeenth century artists. It would be interesting to have some of Raeburn's simpler and stronger pictures, where this quality is best seen, placed alongside of corresponding works by either of his southern rivals. In some directions, already indicated, the Scots-

* Véron's "Æsthetics." London, 1879, p. 242.

man would suffer; but it is not unlikely that his recognition of the element of atmosphere would impart to the others a something of the unsubstantial, flimsy, or unreal; as when one opposes a Rubens to a Velasquez, or compares some modern *genre* painters with Terburg. Such, at least, is the inference to be drawn from the comparison already made of typical examples in the Scottish National Gallery.* And is it not this, rather than any similarity of touch, which gives the kinship with the Spanish painter so emphatically claimed for him in Wilkie's letters from Madrid?

Some have regretted that Raeburn elected to remain in Scotland, where he lacked the stimulus of competition. It is always a vain thing to dwell on the "might have been"; but if one may indulge such fancies, it is surely more to be regretted that, through the mannerisms of his almost constant use of one scheme of lighting, and his subservience to custom in the matter of arranged backgrounds, the modern note in his work is obscured. The *Glengarry* is an example of what he could accomplish when freed from these self-imposed trammels. One thing is tolerably certain, his removal to London would have seriously hindered the development of art in Scotland; indeed, there might have been no "Scottish School of Painting" to write about, and that could hardly have been for the ultimate advantage even of British art. For over-centralisation, rather than its opposite, is the danger to which art is exposed in these later times, and it is owing not a little to the example of Sir Henry that Scotland, whilst sending many of its best painters to work in the wider field, has always been able to retain within

* See Note B, p. 68.

its borders a strong and virile school of painting to develop on its own lines, in a way that would have been impossible had all its abler artists gone south. At the date of his death—1823—there was already in the Scottish capital a school of portraiture, founded on his practice, for its exponents had the something in common implied in the term, and that something they owed to the stimulating art of Raeburn.

Note A.

PORTRAIT OF COLONEL MACDONELL OF GLENGARRY.

In the context the opinion is expressed that this portrait was not painted in Raeburn's studio, but at Invergarry, or some more easily accessible mansion-house, where such conditions of lighting as are seen in the picture could be had. Its contrast in this respect to Raeburn s normal portraiture of that period was first pointed out to me by a brother artist; and, as certain inferences are drawn from these differences, I have endeavoured to ascertain, by communication with the owner of the picture, what likelihood there was for the conjecture. In reply to my query, Mr. J. Cunninghame, of Balgownie, wrote me, August 15, 1904: "I believe it was done in the Chief's own house. I have looked through the family papers, &c., but can find no record of the picture being painted. I am, however, almost certain that my grand-aunt, Miss Louisa Macdonell of Glengarry, told me that the Raeburn portrait of my great-grandfather, Glengarry, was painted by Raeburn in the Chief's own house. I am the more certain of this, because the shield which is hanging on the wall in the background is amongst the other Glengarry

guns, arms, &c., which are in my possession." This letter was followed by one of date August 26, in which Mr. Cuninghame writes: "From the inquiries I have made of relations, I am quite convinced that the painting was done at the Chief's own house."

Some doubts which arose as to the date of the portrait have also, I think, been cleared up by Mr. Cuninghame. As it was exhibited in London in 1812—it was No. 1 in the Royal Academy Catalogue of that year—the inference was that it was painted shortly before that date, and I have considered it as a product of that time. But in the Catalogue of the Raeburn Exhibition of 1876 it is stated to have been painted about 1800. On this coming to my knowledge I endeavoured to find out the date of Glengarry's birth, by which means, and judging by the apparent age of the chieftain in the portrait, an approximate finding might be arrived at. But, though one or two authorities give the date of Glengarry's death—he was drowned at the wreck of the *Stirling Castle* in 1828—neither his age nor the year of his birth is mentioned. As, however, Mr. Cuninghame informs me that his great-grandfather was born on September 15, 1774, and as the portrait represents a man at least some years over thirty, there is little doubt that the picture was painted not very long before it was exhibited. In his letter Mr. Cuninghame quotes a relative whom he had consulted on the matter: "I do not think it possible that the Raeburn portrait could have been painted in 1800, when Glengarry was twenty-six; it represents a much older man than Angelica Kauffmann's"; and he adds: "This latter portrait is in my possession, and my mother used to tell me that Kauffmann's portrait was Glengarry as a young man and Raeburn's as an old man."

Of course, Glengarry would be only in his thirty-eighth year, assuming the portrait to have been painted in the

spring of 1812; but the very fact that it was contrasted with the other in this way, and the initial unlikelihood of Raeburn having sent to the Royal Academy a picture a dozen years old, seems effectually to dispose of the date given in the 1876 Catalogue.

Note B.

RAEBURN'S *GLENGARRY* AND GAINSBOROUGH'S *MRS. GRAHAM.*

Concerning the qualities attributed to the Raeburn, in the comparison made between these two pictures, a passage in Véron's "Æsthetics" may be cited: "Although this question of *enveloppe* (or 'keeping') obtains so little consideration from the public, we should not on that account conclude that they are insensible to its existence. Among the more or less conscious sensations which combine to form their opinions, it is a latent, but an efficacious factor. It attracts by a secret charm, which analysis might refer indeed to other and even absurd causes, but which is not the less real on that account."—Véron's "Æsthetics," p. 240.

CHAPTER V

WILKIE. 1785–1841

Whilst Raeburn was laying the foundations of a strong school of portraiture in Edinburgh, another influence appeared in the person of David Wilkie. Younger than the portrait-painter by about thirty years, Wilkie may yet be said to share with him the honour of being a founder of the Scottish School; and though his place is secondary in point of time, his influence was, during his lifetime and the succeeding generation, much more marked than that of the earlier master.

Their careers present a striking contrast, and, had biographical narration been the writer's purpose, he would have had to tell how the painter of all that was strongest and loveliest amongst Scottish men and women of his time lived in comparative obscurity, whilst the stripling painter of *Village Politicians*, awoke one morning to find himself famous. This fame was well deserved, and still abides, though the trump of the fickle goddess may have lost something of its earlier note. Raeburn, as has been seen, stumbled on a technique of his own, and a manner of seeing which associates him in a peculiar way with modern methods. It was different with Wilkie. From the day he could handle a brush, he seems to have accepted the Dutch and Flemish *genre* painters as his models, both in

respect of technique and arrangement. In his earliest attempts even his manner of seeing nature seems to have been derived from the same source; for the peasant groups of these works—notably two in the possession of Mr. Boyd Kinnear—have more of the Dutch boor than the Fifeshire hind about them. It is not definitely known whether, at this time, Wilkie had seen any examples of Brouwer or Ostade, with whom those studies associate him; but it is not unlikely that in Edinburgh, or in the collections of some of the Fife county gentry, which would be accessible to him, examples of these masters or their followers had come under his observation. At all events, he would know them well through prints and engravings.*

David Allan has been called a precursor of Wilkie, but he is so only in virtue of having had the courage to turn from the conventional classic themes of the period to the rustic and pastoral life of his own country. There is not a hint in the most immature of Wilkie's studies that he is otherwise indebted to Allan. The painter instinct of the boy would enable him to discern how infinitely superior was the craft of even such second-rate masters of the schools of the Low Countries as he would be likely to see; nor is it to be forgotten that in his master Graham he had a very competent guide and example in all that pertained to technique. He did not long remain a slavish follower of his chosen ideals, for already in *The Village Recruit*, *Pitlessie Fair*,† and *Village Politicians*, all painted before he had well passed twenty, though the methods remain,

* It is known that Mr. Geddes—father of Andrew Geddes, A.R.A.—had a considerable collection of pictures and a very large collection of engravings. A Mr. McFarquhar was also a collector of the latter on a great scale, and doubtless there were others.

† In the possession of Mr. Kinnear, Edinburgh.

his keen observation of nature is gradually emancipating him from the hideous types associated with the work of the seventeenth century masters. Uncouth enough they are, some of those Fifeshire carles, but the big-headed, bulbous-nosed, Brouwer-like peasant is giving way to the canny Scot of his own neighbourhood. In the crowded canvas of *Pittlessie Fair*, which must have occupied him during a considerable period of 1804, one can read the growth of the young artist, both as regards this faculty of observation and technical ability, in the finer types and more sensitive touch which distinguish certain of its figures and incidents. As yet the painter shows nothing of his later gifts of design and chiaroscuro; in many of the groups the colour is unpleasantly red and the execution heavy, whilst the types chosen still recall the merrymakings of the Low Countries. But here and there, as in the old farmer with his hand on the head of the fair-haired urchin while he fumbles in his pocket for a coin; in the boy playing the Jew's-harp; and in various touches of a kindlier humour, there is a hint of what the near future was to reveal.

In London, at any rate, to which he removed about this time, taking with him the two completed Fifeshire pictures and the sketch for *Village Politicians*, he would not lack opportunity of seeing the works of his favourite masters. We know that his success with the last-named picture threw open to him the choicest collections of the metropolis, and that when he commenced *The Blind Fiddler* for Sir George Beaumont, it was with a Teniers beside him, lent by his liberal friend and patron.

The last-named picture, the most typical of Wilkie's first period, was painted in his twenty-first year, and shows

the artist adding to the qualities which had already brought him fame in his *Village Politicians*. Any lengthened description of the theme and arrangement is superfluous, it is as familiar through Burnet's fine engraving as is the appearance of Buonaparte or Walter Scott. There is scope for a kindlier humanity in this homely subject than was afforded by the previous year's picture. In the one, political controversy emphasises, in a humorous way, the individualities of the groups about the alehouse table and fireside; in the other, the strains of the violin supply the influence which makes that humble world kin. And though the technique may resemble more closely that of Teniers, the arrangement is less like. It is the almost universal practice of the Fleming, in his interior subjects, to have the main and subordinate groups on different planes. To this *Village Politicians* conforms. Not so the other, where Wilkie has grouped his rustic company in a manner entirely his own.

In the painting he follows his model frankly, if rather timidly, as was to be expected in one so young. Alike in the prevalence of the negative colours of which Teniers was fond—here taking the form of a rather slaty grey—in the dainty manipulation, and in the introduction of the full note of red in the Fiddler's cowl, we recognise the Flemish master. As with him also, the pigment is limpid and thin, even in the lighter surfaces of the draperies, and its consistency is scarcely greater in the flesh, the high lights only having a slightly heavier impasto. The positive red of the cowl is skilfully echoed in various of the draperies and accessories throughout the picture, whilst the ambers and yellows of the central group, and the greenish dress of the child, lead from the more positive

colours to the olives of the darker draperies and the umbers of the background. The design is quite original, and the drawing is careful throughout, though it has not all the ease and grace he afterwards attained. One misses something of litheness in the forms of the two little girls —the face of the sleeping child is rather unchildlike—and of the figures on the extreme right, the girl is of too masculine a type, and the boy, though intended as a foil, smacks too much of caricature.

As regards sentiment and feeling it is all Wilkie. Neither Fleming nor Dutchman has given us anything like this homely incident of cottage life. Greuze was a sentimentalist, Hogarth bitterly satirical, Chardin less dramatic. Here nothing is forced, a fine unconsciousness pervades the group. The face and figure of the principal actor in the scene, his grizzled locks, unshaven chin and agile hands, the slightly bent figure, the foot beating time to the music, and the weather-worn habiliments in which he is clad—all rendered with a deftness which leaves nothing to be desired—combine to make it one of the notable achievements of modern *genre*. One gathers from the action of the father snapping his fingers to the child dandled on its mother's knee, and from the vigorous pantomime of the boy with tongs and bellows, that the music discoursed is some reel or strathspey, or one of those airs with a *lilt*, so dear to the Scottish people. The less demonstrative, though by no means irresponsive expression of the old man with his back to the fire gives the same idea, and a foil is provided in the stolid looks of the wayfarer's wife, to whom custom has staled his melodies, the wondering attitude of the children and the armed neutrality of the dog, half hidden under its mistress's chair.

This picture, with a pathos all its own, may be said to have secured Wilkie's position in the affections of the people. Its defects are those incident to very early works, but one of his latest biographers has not overshot the mark in classing it, as a work of youthful genius, with Potter's *Young Bull* at the Hague.

A painter's career is never a continuous growth, and it was only natural that there should be failures, or comparative failures, in the succession of Wilkie's works. But, at least during the first twenty years of his practice, he fell short of himself only to rise to new triumphs. *Alfred in the Neatherd's Cottage*, and other more trivial productions, were before long succeeded by *The Rent Day*, and that again after a somewhat longer interval by *The Village Festival.* Both belong to the series by which he is best remembered. As the latter differs materially in style and arrangement from the work already dwelt on, an analysis of its qualities will furnish some idea of the trend of the painter's genius when as yet in its early prime.

The picture, exhibited in 1812, was painted for Mr. Angerstein, whose collection afterwards formed the nucleus of the National Gallery. Four years separated it from his last considerable effort—*The Rent Day*—and it may be inferred from its numerous figures and the variety and complexity of its grouping, that it occupied the artist during a considerable portion of the intervening time. It is well known that, in spite of royal and noble commissions, the modest value Wilkie put on his more elaborate compositions compelled him, whilst they were in progress, to produce pictures less exacting on his time and talents, single figures sometimes, and portraits, that the wolf might be kept from the door. This is the true and sufficient expla-

nation of the considerable intervals which separate his greater works from each other. But to return to the picture under consideration: *The Village Festival* stands apart not only from the works already mentioned, but from the series generally. It differs in respect of the smaller proportion of the figures to their surroundings, and the scattered grouping so often commented on; but also for another characteristic not so generally noted, viz., that of the whole series, it is the most thoroughly English. The painter had come to London in 1805. The pictures painted immediately thereafter, *Village Politicians* and *The Blind Fiddler*, naturally bore the strong impress of Scottish character; and the same, though less markedly, may be affirmed of *The Rent Day*, which, we are told, was designed during a visit he paid to his home at Cults in 1807. But the lapse of years and the influence of his surroundings tended gradually to the loss of any strongly national character. Even when the subject treated is Scottish, one begins to feel a certain artificiality in the types. Scots models can always be had in a cosmopolitan centre like London, but that is a poor substitute for the daily contact and observation on which *Pitlessie Fair* and *Village Politicians* had been constructed. In this picture of 1812, he is frankly English. In its every feature this great rambling inn, with its timber beams and latticed windows, its portico and balustrades, its creeper-clad walls and wide courtyard, is, in spite of the lion rampant on its sign, of the south. So, too, are the groups of merrymakers seated about the tables or clustering round the inebriated peasant of the central group. The folks o' Fife would never disport themselves so.

In regard to technique also, there is a change from

the picture of five or six years earlier, which one can the more readily realise from their being hung in close proximity in the National Gallery. Here there is little of either Teniers or Ostade except that skill of handling they share with the "little masters" generally, in which Wilkie now rivals the best of them. The slaty negative tones of the Fleming are gone, nor can the warmer browns he uses later in such works as *Blind Man's Buff* be said to be much in evidence. The fact of its being an open-air picture may have something to do with it, but it seems as if here Wilkie's manner is hardly that of either the works that preceded or those which followed it. There is nowhere else in the artist's work, so far as the writer is acquainted with it, a technique quite like that in some of the heads of the central group and of those at the adjoining table. Richer in colour, they are wrought with a full brush and a delicacy of touch he has never surpassed. The expression of Bacchanalian revelry in the former is delicious, whilst for the general gusto and abandon with which it moves and sways about, the group of which they form part is as fine as anything ever accomplished by Rubens or Jordaens in their countless dedications to the wine god. This group furnishes the leading motive of the picture both as regards narrative interest and pictorial arrangement. Its central figure, the man in the smock frock, is being dragged one way by his wife and child, and another by his boon companions; the forces of good and evil tug and strain, and victory still hangs in the balance. The struggle has its pathetic as well as its humorous aspect evinced in the anxious face of the woman, the appealing action of the girl, and in the limp attitude and vacuous countenance of Hodge himself, who has reached the stage of

blessed indifference to all mundane considerations. As is the centre of interest, so the scattered lights are focused in his ample smock of creamy white, which, in conjunction with the light draperies of his better half, dominates the higher notes of a finely distributed chiaroscuro. Leaving this main group, the eye wanders to the table on the left where Boniface pours the foaming ale, the warmth of his beaming visage kept in check by his scarlet waistcoat, as are those of his customers generally by the more positive hues of the stronger toned draperies.

The action and interest of the scene is sustained in the revellers who swarm about the tables, the doorways, and on the window-sills behind, whilst on the gallery over the portico a young man offers a glass—presumably of wine or strong waters—to a girl who shrinks from it with a look of mingled coyness and horror. The painting of this bit of by-play is delicious. With touch light as a feather, Wilkie has expressed in this figure and a companion seated beside her all the grace and charm of girlhood. Let those who talk of "mere painting" note how inseparable are delicacy of expression and sensitiveness of touch. What would a clumsy manipulation have made of the features of these half-inch faces, or of the soft white draperies and rustic bonnets here so perfectly rendered and deftly wrought by a hand trained to unison with the most subtle perceptions of the brain?

The picture is not without its flaws, both of composition and colour. Besides the scattered nature of the former the group in the right foreground is not only unsatisfactory in itself, it lacks cohesion with the rest of the picture. One feels that the undulating and flowing lines of the composition are too abruptly stopped by the

upright figure of the girl, and that the expedients of poodle dog, boxes, and scattered articles of various sorts fail to unite this dark corner with the other groups. The colour, too, is somewhat livid in the breast and arms of the anxious wife, and unpleasantly winey in the faces of some of the subordinate figures. The sky and background generally are heavy in colour, though they form an effective setting for the figures. But these are slight defects in a work in some ways unique in Wilkie's practice, where one can feel here and there the influence of artists not usually associated with his work—of Rubens, not in the Silenus-like group only, but in the thinner painting of the figures about the window-sill; and of Morland in the subject-matter and the types.

This notable picture was followed at shorter intervals by several of his most popular works. To the exhibition of 1813 he contributed *Blind Man's Buff*, and within the next three years he completed *The Letter of Introduction*, *Duncan Gray*, *The Pedlar*, *Distraining for Rent*, and *The Rabbit on the Wall*. The first-named is perhaps the best known and most popular of all his works. With various other Wilkies of different periods it is in the Royal collection, but there is at the Tate Gallery* a study which, as it corresponds closely with the finished picture, and is more readily accessible to the public, has been used as the basis of what follows. Was ever scene of rustic merrymaking depicted like this? In vividness it ranks with the finest creations of the literary art in a similar *genre*. It has the true inwardness, the

* "Pour moi, si j'avais à choisir dans tout l'œuvre de Wilkie, je prendrais cette esquisse du *Blindman's Buff*." "Tresors d'Arten Angleterre," par W. Bürger.

BLIND MAN'S BUFF

BY SIR DAVID WILKIE, R.A., *H.*R.S.A.

PURCHASED BY HIS MAJESTY THE KING

spontaneity of *Halloween* or *The Jolly Beggars*. Instinctively one takes part in this shifting drama with its kaleidoscopic movement, its racket of falling furniture and trampling feet: it requires an effort to pass from the enjoyment of the abounding mirth and humorous by-play of the scene itself to an analysis of the work of art. And this speaks volumes for the composition; for any awkwardness or disjointedness of arrangement, such as that just noted in *The Village Festival*, would at once relieve us from the effort. But here all is of a piece, it is the art which conceals art. Not only is it Wilkie's finest work in this respect, it is one of the finest compositions ever placed on canvas. Judged from the reproductions, as a piece of black and white, how those flowing lines and finely-balanced masses of light and shadow fill the space! Again, what a variety and complexity of form and lighting is contained within the broader masses! How grateful to the eye is the suppleness of what one may call the consenting parts of the scheme, and the subtlety with which the lights and darks lead up to the white bandaged central figure! The colour is richer than in the early pictures, having something of the deeper tones which distinguish Ostade from Teniers; browns and ambers are gaining on the more chilly material of his first efforts. Here again one is reminded how large a part the handcraft plays in the rendering of expression; in every one of these miniature heads one can feel the sympathy between the thought and the craft which gives it being. In the study the limpid and flowing brushwork is sometimes accented with a line, as in the profile of the nearest girl, vitalising what might otherwise tend to over softness. Nor can one overlook here that which is a feature in most

of Wilkie's pictures, the expression conveyed by the hands. That outstretched arm and groping left hand of the principal figure, and its manner of rendering, is a touch of genius. It is in such passages that one realises the distance that separates this master of modern *genre* from the scores of capable men who have followed in his footsteps.

It were tedious to follow in detail the succession of his works. In *The Letter of Introduction* the theme is simpler, but the rendering of the mingled gravity and humour of the occasion no less exquisite; "one of the most finely characterised pictures he has painted—a composition, one would say, taken from a romance of Balzac," says Bürger in his "Art Treasures of England." And competent critics who have had an opportunity of studying the picture are agreed that Wilkie has here attained his high-water mark as a craftsman. *Distraining for Rent*, which touches a more pathetic chord, was purchased by the Directors of the British Institution. In 1819, some half-dozen years after the completion of *Blind Man's Buff*, we find the painter again represented by a subject which gave all his qualities full play.

Like the last-named picture, *The Penny Wedding* is Royal property, and forms for it an ideal companion. As a composition it lacks the compactness of its pendant, but it is no less successful as a rendering of another aspect of the drama of rustic life. Here Wilkie returns to the national types demanded by his theme, and we know that he had made extensive studies and sketches for it during his long visit to the north in the summer and autumn of 1817. In this respect it differs from *Blind Man's Buff*, where the types are not markedly Scotch and the setting

THE PENNY WEDDING

By Sir David Wilkie R.A., *H.R.S.A.*

is thoroughly English ; for that great apartment with its oaken settle, jack wheel and bacon racks, belongs—like the background of *The Village Festival*—rather to the south than to the north. In *The Penny Wedding* there is a thoroughly Scottish interior, somewhat expanded to suit the artistic presentment of the subject, and the various groups exhibit the national traits both of feature and deportment. Music and dancing and feasting go on apace. A foursome reel is up, and neither Wilkie himself nor any other master has excelled this spirited and vivacious rendering of these exponents of the national institution.

> "Nae cotillon brent-new frae France
> But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys and reels
> Put life and mettle i' their heels."

Was ever action depicted like that of the youth with the flying coat-tails, who leaps and bounds and snaps his fingers over against his strapping though less demonstrative partner who, hand on haunch and bare arm akimbo, regards him with an amused smile. Or that other who fairly doubles himself up as he leans towards the sonsy lass, bobbing and twisting and twirling in front of him. One can hear the "Hooch" to which he gives vent.

In technique there is again a change, for one finds here, combined with the sensitive craftsmanship of the preceding ten years, a treatment of the flesh in which reflected light is largely used in the shadows and half-tones. Since he painted *Blind Man's Buff*, Wilkie has seen something of the Continent and its art treasures, having visited Paris in 1814, when he had Haydon as a companion, and the Low Countries with Raimbach in

1816. We know from the painter's journals and letters that he was ever on the outlook for anything that would aid the development of his beloved art; and doubtless the more luminous treatment now alluded to was largely due to his observations on these two occasions. As yet it is distinctly beneficial, though later the use of the reflected light became a mannerism with Wilkie and his followers.

Reading the Will, 1821, *Chelsea Pensioners*, and *The Parish Beadle* of 1822 and 1823 may be said to conclude the series of pictures with which Wilkie's fame is indelibly associated. The picture of 1822, painted for the Duke of Wellington, he had in hand for six years, though he seems to have accomplished the bulk of it within two. The story of the Duke's visit to the studio, his suggestion of the subject, and the artist's eager compliance, as also the manner in which payment was made, are too well known to bear repetition. *Chelsea Pensioners reading the Gazette of the Battle of Waterloo*—to give it its full title—had a phenomenal success. By artists, the press, and the general public alike, it was received with enthusiasm. "This magical performance," comments one paper, "is by the hand of Wilkie, and we hail its appearance on more accounts than one. 'Richard is himself again!' In saying this we mean that Wilkie has here recovered all his original force, brilliancy, and truth." And Géricault, who visited London that year, writing to an artist friend, singles out this picture—the subject could hardly have commended it– as an example to the painters of his own country. In truth the artist's hand has lost nothing of its cunning. In this vivid memorial of the greatest event of his age, he has better vindicated his title to be considered a painter of history

than in the John Knox and Queen Mary episodes of later years.

Soon there came the great change, to be regretted in more senses than one, which characterised the last fifteen years of Wilkie's practice. Overtaken in the full tide of prosperity by a succession of misfortunes which seriously affected his health, foreign travel was recommended as a restorative. Unable for months to exercise his calling, his active mind was ever at work, seeking to assimilate something of the glow of colour and of the larger handling of the Italian masters, whom now for the first time he had leisure to study in their appropriate surroundings. His letters from various foreign cities to Sir Thomas Lawrence, Collins, and others, are full of the discoveries he is making, and of resolutions for the future founded on his wider experience. From Rome he writes to the latter on December 3, 1825, an interesting narrative of his journey thitherwards *viâ* Milan, Genoa, Pisa, and Florence, with the impressions he had gathered from the collections in those local centres. Winding up with a glowing estimate of Raphael and Michael Angelo, in the latter of whom he finds not only a master of design but a great colourist, he adds regarding Italy: "I am thankful that I have seen it; and if I should recover my health and powers of application, I shall bless the present affliction for having put this long-looked-for gratification within my reach, at a period that I hope is not too late for benefiting by it." Nearly two years later he writes to the same friend, from Geneva, a still more interesting letter, in which he enlarges on the paramount importance of colour "if not the first" "at least an essential quality in painting: no master has as yet maintained his ground beyond his own time without it":—

"in oil painting it is richness and depth alone that can do justice to the material." And again from Bayonne, after having spent the winter in Madrid, he writes with all his impressions and resolutions in regard to depth and glow of colour confirmed: "With *me*, no starved surface now: no dread of oil, no 'perplexity for fear of change.'"

From another phrase in this Bayonne letter, "I feel the wisdom of Sir George Beaumont's advice to me, to reflect 'that *white is not light, and detail is not finish*,'" at least from the latter part of it, we can gather that, along with greater depth and glow of colour, Wilkie is aiming after a larger manner of painting. "I have now," he writes to Lawrence, "from the study of the old masters, adopted a bolder, and, I think, a more effective style; and one result is rapidity." One cannot but admire the ardour with which the painter, no longer young in years, and already mature in accomplishment, sought after the larger manifestations of technique with which he was confronted in the masterpieces of Italy and Spain. What the result might have been had Wilkie visited those countries twenty years earlier it is impossible to say. On the whole it is perhaps well that he did not, for it is difficult to imagine an adequate compensation for the work he gave us during those years. All gifts are not committed to one, and, fortunately for us, the artist followed his original bent for a period sufficient to secure for him an enduring fame. Coming at the time it did, this three years study of the old masters, while it doubtless gave variety to the sum total of his work, robbed it of much of its character. In those life-size portraits and illustrations of long past or recent history, one recognises many admirable artistic qualities, but no longer the unique Wilkie. He seems indeed to have fallen into the

very error—no unusual thing—he was so quick to detect in the painters of the decadence, who, he writes, in a letter already quoted from, "have allowed technicalities to get the better of them, until, simplicity giving way to intricacy, they appear to have painted more for the artist and the connoisseur than for the untutored apprehensions of ordinary men."

It is easy to understand the attractions "rapidity" would have for him coming at the time it did, for to his other misfortunes there was added, whilst he was in Rome, the news of the failure of his printsellers, Hurst and Robinson, a failure which involved him in serious financial difficulties. Like his countryman, Sir Walter Scott, he faced these embarrassments bravely. Given only a renewal of health, he feels capable of surmounting them, contesting them inch by inch, as he puts it. To this end the rapidity of the "more effective style" he has adopted would be a powerful auxiliary. In place of labouring for years on the multitudinous details of such pictures as *The Penny Wedding* and *Chelsea Pensioners*, which left him poor in spite of the seemingly large prices obtained, he is now, he writes to Collins, to paint his whole picture as that artist painted his skies—whilst it is still wet; an ideal which has haunted many, and which has been attained on rare occasions by some few masters of the larger technique. But Wilkie was not of these, and the hand so agile and adroit, after twenty years of such work as satisfied the "little masters" of Holland, refused to conform itself to the new ideal.

The result of all this is observable in the larger scale generally adopted and in the greatly increased output of work from about 1828 onwards. His first essay in

portraiture on a large scale, that of the *Earl of Kellie* for the County Hall, Cupar, is remarkably successful, as is *Viscount Melville*, painted two years later, in 1831, for the University of St. Andrews. Both are full of character, and contrast favourably with the full length of *His Majesty George IV. in Highland Costume*, of the intervening year. The portraits of Lord Kellie and of Lord Melville are treated in a somewhat similar manner; both are full front, in robes of office, and seated. The former, an old man, with high bald forehead and scanty locks of grey hair, is of rather insignificant appearance, but, by the adoption of a strong chiaroscuro, the artist has given character to the penetrating eyes and thin lips, which saves the head from being swamped in the strong colour-scheme of official robes and other adjuncts. In Lord Melville's portrait the light and shade is less pronounced, the fine head is low toned, and a more sober arrangement has been necessitated by the character of the Chancellor's robes in which he is represented. Both pictures are in good condition; as yet no evil has resulted from his change of theories.

The same cannot be said of the important work of the following year, *The Preaching of Knox before the Lords of the Congregation.** This picture, painted for Sir Robert Peel, Wilkie had on hand for many years. So far back as 1822, when they visited Edinburgh together. Collins notes his having taken a "rather cumbrous" oil sketch of it for Sir Walter Scott's opinion; and Eugène Delacroix speaks of having seen a sketch of the subject—perhaps the same—at Wilkie's studio when he visited London three years later. The work would thus seem to have been designed before the breakdown in the artist's

* In the Tate Gallery.

health and his consequent residence abroad, but seeing it was not exhibited till some four years after his return from Spain, there is little doubt that the bulk of the picture would be painted after the change of style brought about as we have seen. The glow and depth, the chief aim of the new manner, here reveals itself in a forcing of the whole scheme of light and shade. Many of the faces in shadow are quite livid in tone, with a sort of coppery blackness, and the contrast of these with the figures in full light results in a lurid and exaggerated chiaroscuro very unlike that of his earlier practice. For though Wilkie was never of those who finely observed the tones and values, like Terburg and others amongst the Dutch *genre* painters, his good taste had hitherto preserved him from such a forcing of the note as we find here. Neither does his touch seem to adapt itself so well to these medium-sized heads as to the life-size of the portraits just mentioned. Strangest of all, and this perhaps accounts partly for the other defects, the shadowed parts have lost surface, have got clotted and unpleasant, and are breaking up and changing colour. *The First Earring*,* exhibited in 1835, betrays the same slackness and lack of character in the brush work; the colour is luminous, the pigment limpid, but the modelling has lost firmness; if something has been gained in glow and depth, more has been lost in other directions.

Two of the most important of his later works belong to the year 1838—*Sir David Baird discovering the body of Tippoo Sahib*† and *Queen Victoria presiding at the Council upon Her Majesty's Accession, June* 20, 1837. So far as the writer is aware the former is, with the exception

* In the Tate Gallery.

† In the possession of Sir David Baird, Bart., of Newbyth.

of *Napoleon and Pope Pius VII. at Fontainebleau*, the only subject-picture of Wilkie's in which the figures are on the scale of life. The circumstances of the commission, and the difficulties which attended the execution of it, may be gathered from the numerous letters which passed between Lady Baird and the artist, given in the concluding volume of Cunningham's "Life." The figure of Sir David Baird had to be adapted from Raeburn's portrait and another slight drawing, and those of the dead Tippoo and his followers from some Indian soldiers who happened to be in London at the time, and who manifested the greatest reluctance at being associated in any way with the fallen ruler of Mysore. Though somewhat melodramatic in conception the picture possesses many fine qualities, the subordinate figures are grouped with great skill around their leader, and the sense of animation and action is heightened by the weird and fantastic lighting adopted—that of a lantern and torches. Mysterious shadows are cast upward and backwards into the recesses of the vaulted eastern apartment, where a struggle is still going on. The head of the woman who points to the body of Tippoo, and whose cheek and naked breast are strongly illumined by the lantern she holds, makes a fine contrast with those of the fighting men around her. The horizontal lines of the dead Sultan, and those who have died with him, in the foreground, are the least satisfactory feature of an arrangement otherwise fine, both in regard to composition and light and shade. Of the Royal commission of the same date, the writer can speak only from a recollection of some years back, but the impression left is of a technique which conforms itself better to the scale of the work. It is difficult to draw any definite conclusion from work left in progress, but it almost seems

as if in *Knox Administering the Sacrament at Calder House*† there was a return to the firmer modelling of his earlier years.

Etching was an art not much practised by the painters of those days, but of the seven plates published by Wilkie in 1824, two at least, *The Pope Examining a Censer* and *Gentleman at his Desk* are masterpieces. Hamerton, in his remarks on the former, devotes some lines to the charm of Wilkie's drawing which are interesting in connection with those to be quoted from the "Journal of Eugène Delacroix." "The draughtsmanship," he says, "is of that happy kind which, fully possessing precision, allows itself perfect freedom." This he likens to "the freedom of the most beautiful manners." In truth, both here and in *The Lost Receipt*, as the other is sometimes called, there is all that sensitiveness in the management of the graver which characterises his touch in *Blind Man's Buff* and *The Letter of Introduction*. In the first-named and most highly finished plate, the Pontiff, seated in an arm-chair, examines through raised eye-glasses the work of the goldsmith, with "a royal naturalness of attitude," to quote Mr. Hamerton again. The aristocratic profile and long-fingered hands refined by age are expressed with lines at once incisive and tender, which contrast with the more brusque rendering of the kneeling artificer. The accessories of costume and sumptuous background are appropriately handled with more open and closer cross-hatchings respectively. *The Lost Receipt* is even more fascinating in its slighter treatment, for here the expression and attitudes of the waiting tradesman and the gentleman and his wife who anxiously rummage for the missing document,

† In the National Gallery of Scotland.

are given in delicate lines and with a minimum of shadow. Yet these are sufficient, and the plate has the charm of those *ébauches* and *esquisses* which so excited the admiration of the French romanticist. When Mr. Ruskin called etching "the bungler's art," he had certainly neither of these plates in his mind's eye.

Wilkie is one of the most interesting personalities in British Art, and it is fortunate that we have in Cunningham's three volumes, and in the numerous references to him by artists and others with whom he was associated, ample materials in relation to his views on art, and the place he held in the art world of his time. His letters to friends and brother artists, and the extracts from journals of which the "Life" is largely made up, depict for us minutely the phases and tendencies of his art life from beginning to end. The outstanding feature of his early years is the omission of the Roman apprenticeship. Whether this was at first from choice or necessity hardly appears; certainly he could have accomplished it, if so minded, within a few years of his settling in London. The Napoleonic wars were in full swing, but such risk as there was would not have hindered one of Wilkie's ardent temperament from reaching his goal. Was it that his preoccupation during those years with the Dutch and Flemish masters prevailed against a practice which had become habitual with his conntrymen, or that the greater interest manifested in modern and native art about that date was tending to break down a convention of long standing? When he does get to Rome in 1825, he speaks, indeed, of its being a "long-expected pleasure," but it does not appear that he ever regretted not having studied in Rome in the old sense of the phrase.

His success in London was phenomenal. To realise the

vivid interest which his works aroused, it is only necessary to glance over the cuttings from contemporary press notices kept in the Fine Art Library at South Kensington. With few exceptions the pictures from *Village Politicians* to *Chelsea Pensioners* were received with sympathetic and warm approval, the best known of the series with something akin to an ovation. For the praise was far from indiscriminate: indeed, what strikes one about those early nineteenth century articles is the intelligence with which they appraise the relative merits of the various pictures in their turn. Though written mostly from the popular point of view, the gist of the criticism still holds good, both as regards the narrative and technical aspects of the works reviewed. It is only in the nature of things that, since Wilkie's day, both art and art criticism should have passed through various phases, and the net result of two generations of the latter may have been to detract somewhat from the estimate placed on his work by some of the writers alluded to. But those sixty-five years have brought nothing to justify the rather slighting tone often adopted in art circles towards Wilkie and his work. The term "literary" is applied in a vague way to the interest of such pictures as his, with the implication that they are thereby relegated to a lower class. Now, though it is quite true that the narrative or human interest does not constitute a picture a work of art, it is absurd to hold that it precludes it from being so, or lessens its chance of attaining that distinction. Nothing can raise it to the region of art but its art qualities; in other words, its harmonious arrangement of line, form, colour, and chiaroscuro—the elements with which the artist has specially to deal. But a picture, like a poem or a romance, is not only a work of

art, it is a message from its author to a public he desires to interest, and so long as he works on æsthetic lines the width of the appeal does not lessen its art possibilities. A quotation already given from a letter to Collins on the importance of colour—"no master has yet maintained his ground beyond his own time without it"—shows that Wilkie was under no delusion as to narrative interest being a substitute for art qualities. But he was equally awake to the danger of losing touch with the elemental interests of humanity, and to the neglect of this, as we know from another quotation, and the concerning themselves exclusively with technicalities, he attributed that loss of simplicity which characterises the painters of the decadence. In truth, the appeal to "unlearned observers" and to "the common people" seems to have in it a saving power, as of a salt to keep art sane and healthy. The "literary interest" insinuation carries a sort of half-truth which is apt to confuse the mind, but in regard to Wilkie it is altogether beside the mark. His merits on the artistic side are undeniable. Though not of the robust order, his technique has that sympathetic quality which, in its higher manifestations, distinguishes genius from mere cleverness or talent. His exquisite sense of line and form might be demonstrated from a score of passages in his best-known pictures, not in the accurate academic sense, it is true, which never can express action—and it is especially in connection with figures in motion that Wilkie draws so marvellously—but in the far higher sense which brings interior passion to supplement nature. Delacroix recognises in him one of those who have drawn by instinct. Writing in his journal for 1840, of the secret of drawing belonging only to such, he goes on: "It is not at the moment of setting to work that

one must elaborate one's study with precise measurements and the plumb line. Long habit is necessary to have this exactness, which in presence of nature will of itself assist the impassioned desire of rendering it. Wilkie also has the secret." * And is it not this same attribute of genius which makes possible such delicate renderings of expression as those referred to in the girls on the balcony in *The Village Festival*, and the outstretched arm and groping hand in *Blind Man's Buff*? Sir George Beaumont has left it on record that when Wilkie painted he seemed scarcely to breathe, so intense was his application; and when studying such passages as these, one can almost feel that a breath would have deflected the hand or broken the spell which, for the time being, made it, like the tongue of the orator, one with the working brain.

In truth, Wilkie's technique in the works by which he is best remembered is never small, though he worked on a small scale. There has lately been a tendency with some critics to identify this very useful term with a slashing style. One reads, for instance, that such a one, whatever his deficiencies, has technique. Substitute the English equivalent and the phrase is meaningless. Technique is simply workmanship, and it is good or otherwise as it is appropriate to the scale or sentiment of the work. But fine technique is always large, though the picture may be on the scale of inches, and one could find passages in Wilkie and Meissonier — the smaller pictures at Hertford House, for instance — which place them amongst the masters, nor would it be difficult to demonstrate that much of the paint-slinging to which the term is applied, in a complimentary sense, is as little entitled to it as the

* "Journal de Eugène Delacroix," Paris, 1893, vol. i. p. 196.

smallest niggling. What signifies the elbow of Hals without his brain and hand? Often, it is true, Wilkie's more laboured work loses the vivacity inseparable from the finest craftsmanship, but that is true more or less of all painters. To quote again Delacroix, "J'ai été chez M. Wilkie et je ne l'apprecie que depuis ce moment. Ses tableaux achevés m'avient deplu, et dans le fait ses ébauches et ses esquisses sont au-dessus de tous les éloges. Comme tous les peintres des tous les âges et de tous les pays, il gâte régulièrement ce qu'il fait de beau"; and, again, "J'ai vu chez Wilkie une esquisse de *Knox le puritain prêchant devant Marie Stuart.* Je ne peux l'exprimer combien c'est beau, mais je crains qu'il ne la gâte; c'est une manie fatale."* And, writing long years afterwards of this same occasion, "Je m'étais permis de lui dire en le voyant, avec une impétuosité toute Française 'qu'Appollon lui-même, prenant le pinceau, ne pouvait que la gâter en la finissant.'"† Few will question the Frenchman's right to speak on such a subject, or the measure of truth contained in the criticism of the finished pictures. Another master of the brush, of the same great school, one who can as little be suspected of partiality for work such as Wilkie's, is equally complimentary, and though the reference is primarily to the rendering of expression, it would never have excited the artist's enthusiasm unless conveyed through a sympathetic technique. Writing from London to Horace Vernet, in 1822, Géricault thus refers to the *Chelsea Pensioners.* "In a little picture, very simple in subject, he appears to great advantage. The scene takes place near the Military Hospital (Chelsea); it

* "Journal de Eugène Delacroix," Paris, 1893, vol. i. p. 196.

† *Ibid.* vol. iii. p. 37, note.

supposes that at the news of a battle those veterans meet to read the *Bulletin* and to enjoy themselves. He has differentiated all his characters with much feeling. I will speak to you only of one figure, which seemed to me the most perfect, and whose attitude and expression draw tears, whether one will or no. It is the wife of a soldier, who, preoccupied with her husband, scans the list of the dead, with unquiet and haggard eye. Your imagination will tell you all that that troubled countenance expresses. There is neither crape nor mourning—on the contrary, the wine circulates at all the tables—nor is the sky streaked with the lightnings of mournful prophecy. It attains, nevertheless, the utmost pathos; like nature itself." * The facile handcraft which can limn such emotion is Wilkie's finest legacy to the Scottish school. Half a century later an English critic, speaking of Mr. Pettie's diploma picture, says that it has "the never-failing dexterity of the Scotch." It is not clear whether he meant it as a compliment, but no artist can for a moment doubt that it is so. This "never-failing dexterity" derives from Wilkie, and it more than outweighs the undoubted mannerisms and the questionable methods of his later practice, inherited by the school from the same source.

Wilkie's later development, though it will hardly add to his ultimate reputation, certainly drew out qualities not conspicuous in his earlier pictures. Glow and depth of tone and colour are amongst the greatest aims of the artist, and undoubtedly these qualities are more in evidence in some of the work of the less popular period. But this attainment was more than counterbalanced by the failure

* "Archives de l'Art Français," I^me^ Série, tome 3 (Documents, tome 2), p. 189.

of his technique to adapt itself to the larger scale on which he worked. His touch gets slack and characterless. Preoccupied with colour, he loses sight of the structure of things, with the result that a certain want of firmness pervades these larger compositions. Their merits and defects are indicated in a sentence of Bürger's concerning the *Napoleon and Pope Pius VII. at Fontainebleau.* "The figures are of the size of life, a little shadowy, it is true, and slackly put together; but there are, nevertheless, true qualities of execution in this picture, especially in the background." Unfortunately, owing to the scumblings and varnishings and floodings with oil, which he had at this time adopted, these pictures are fast losing the qualities for which so much had been sacrificed.

But who can read the letters and journals of those years abroad and remain unaffected by the buoyant and eager spirit of this middle-aged enthusiast? Broken in health and tracked by news of misfortune, he wanders from gallery to gallery, questioning, as it were, the dead masters, analysing their processes and weighing their results. His six months in Spain are especially interesting. The first British artist who made himself acquainted with the treasures of the Peninsula—Reynolds had just touched its shores—he finds in its school of portraiture an unexpected resemblance to that of England, and especially to the works of his countryman Raeburn, which he hastens to communicate to his artist correspondents. Velasquez was a revelation to him—the name was not yet on every novice's lip—and though some of his remarks on the great Spaniard may not exactly square with the latest nineteenth century criticism, there can be no doubt of the serious study he devoted to his works. Viardot, in his "*Musées d'Espagne*," gives a delightful reminiscence of

him. He is discussing the picture known as *Los Borrachos*, and how it is necessary to see such a picture again and again, and to concentrate on it the whole force of one's attention. "They tell me," he proceeds, "that the Englishman Wilkie, the painter of *Blind Man's Buff* and *The Rent Day*, came from London to Madrid expressly to study Velasquez; and that, simplifying still more the object of his journey, of all the works of Velasquez, he had studied only this picture. But it was not the method of synthesis, as the philosophers call it, that he had employed; it was that of analysis. He had taken the picture by one corner, and had gone over it, dissecting and dividing it inch by inch to the opposite corner. Each day, whatever the weather, he came to the museum, set himself down before his beloved canvas, spent three hours in a silent ecstasy, then, when fatigue and admiration had exhausted him, with a deep sigh, he took up his hat." * Whatever view one may take of the productions based on such like researches, the record of them lends interest to the personality of one of the founders of the Scottish School.

Small critics have cast at him the epithets "parochial" and "provincial," but the larger-minded amongst them, and the great painters, both his contemporaries and more recent, have recognised in him one of the finest spirits and most capable craftsmen of our school. To those already given there need only be added the following tribute. Writing to the Secretary of the Scottish Academy, on the occasion of the celebration of Wilkie's Centenary, Sir John Millais says: "Only a few days ago I was surrounded

* The late Mr. James Archer, R.S.A., had heard the same story in Madrid, but concerning a different picture, *The Spinners*.

by engravings of his inimitable works, and I was daily surprised with the excellence of his productions. In the history of Art there has been no superior to him for knowledge of composition, beautiful and subtle drawing, portrayal of character and originality. You may well be proud of your greatest painter."

CHAPTER VI

ART TRAINING AND EXHIBITIONS IN EDINBURGH

The nineteenth century was not far on its way before a Scottish School of Painting had become a reality. To this two causes had mainly contributed—the new life and character infused into portraiture by Raeburn, and Wilkie's genius and phenomenal success in London. But a third must not be overlooked—the teaching of John Graham at the Trustees' Academy. To the no small detriment of his own practice this able artist devoted the forenoons and evenings to his scholastic duties, and, like Robert Lauder half a century later, in addition to the power of inspiring enthusiasm, he seems to have had the faculty of so directing the talents of his students as to conserve the individuality of each. During his nineteen years tenure of the mastership he counted among his pupils David Wilkie, William Allan, John Watson Gordon, John Burnet, and the elder Fraser.

The genius and ever increasing fame of the first-mentioned and greatest of Graham's pupils, was the most conspicuous factor in the formation of the Scottish school, but northern art was no less indebted to Raeburn for the sobriety and virility he had imparted to portraiture. Such a combination of influences led to a great increase in the number devoting themselves to painting as a profession, and

also to a quickening of public interest in art matters. This was further stimulated by the formation in 1808 of the Society of Incorporated Artists, which held exhibitions for six successive years with an amount of financial success which proved their undoing, for in 1813, when over £1800 had been realised, a resolution to divide the money was moved and carried, in spite of the efforts of some of the ablest members, including George Watson, Alex. Nasmyth, and Henry Raeburn. The annual exhibitions were continued until 1816 in the large gallery of Raeburn's house in York Place.

The resolution referred to was a misfortune for Scottish art, but the six exhibitions of the society had demonstrated the existence of a native school, and the amount of interest taken in it by the Scottish public. "The Exhibition" had become a feature of the Edinburgh year, and could not long be done without. In biographies and memoirs of the period it is frequently mentioned. Scott drops in on his way from the Court. Pet Marjorie hears it talked of amongst her west-end and suburban relatives, and more than once her precocious journal couples her desire to see a play with a longing to visit "the Exhibition." Clearly some such show was a necessity, and it was only the expected that happened when, three years later, a more ambitious scheme was inaugurated by the formation of the "Institution for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts in Scotland." Modelled on the lines of the British Institution, which had been formed in London some years previously, its purpose was to disseminate a taste for the Fine Arts by holding exhibitions of select works, mostly by the Old Masters. In a country like England, rich in examples of all European schools, this was an admirable

adjunct to the exhibitions devoted to the furtherance of contemporary art. For a long series of years the southern association continued to draw from a supply which was practically inexhaustible. But north of the Tweed things were far different. Collections were few, and exhibitions of modern pictures had to be resorted to. Thus the Institution had in it from the beginning the seeds of dissolution, partly owing to this scarcity of material, but more immediately from its relations with the resident artists. These to the number of twelve had been admitted to the rank of associate membership, but they were excluded from any share in the management.

In 1826, after much discontent and misunderstanding, the more enterprising of the artists established an Academy on the model of the Royal Academy of London. As a majority of the professionals still adhered to the Institution rival exhibitions were held for some time, and the infant society had to face a combination of influences which threatened to stifle its existence before it had well got under way. The nobility and gentry at all interested in Art were with its rivals, its membership was only fifteen, and its application for a charter of incorporation was not only denied, but that favour was conferred on the Institution. It speaks volumes for the courage and wisdom of the founders of the Scottish Academy that, under such circumstances, they not only persevered, but in the course of a very few years, completely drove their opponents from the field. The artists who had held by the Institution, failing to find satisfaction there, in the course of a year or two came over to the victors.

It is beyond the scope of the present work to discuss the vexed question of the effect of academies on the Fine Arts,

but, from the day it received into its ranks those additional twenty-four artists, many of whom had belonged to a rival body, the Scottish Academy may be said to have fairly well represented the resident art talent of Scotland; and from the time its associated artists parted company with it, the Institution, in spite of of its newly obtained charter which added the word "Royal" to its title, became a moribund society. But nothing could better attest the wide-spread interest which was beginning to be felt in the Fine Arts north of the Tweed than the rise of these two bodies. That there should have been in the Scotland of 1826 a hundred and thirty-one noblemen and gentlemen who had subscribed £50 each for the privilege of becoming patrons of art, is a fact well worth the consideration of their successors, who, with greatly increased wealth, seem more inclined to disperse than to form collections. Though rendered nugatory by the want of tact of its managing directors, the aim of the Institution was a noble and enlightened one. It rendered yeoman service to the cause of Art in Scotland by its exhibitions, by its purchase of notable pictures which still enrich our National Gallery, and, above all, by the example given to the Scottish public by those who were then regarded as the natural leaders in matters of taste, thus in great measure insuring the success of the body which may be said to have risen from its ashes.

Turning to the professional combination, we have even more remarkable evidence of the growth of the Fine Arts. It is hard to realise that a country, which a generation before could find employment for only one or two portrait-painters, should be able to show such a muster-roll as the membership of the young Academy discloses. For they

were no men of straw, these forty-two. Amongst them there is a remarkably large proportion of men of talent in various directions. The painters include the three Watsons, Colvin Smith, Graham Gilbert, Francis Grant, and Macnee representing protraiture; Allan, Harvey, Scott Lauder, Duncan, and Scott in the various departments of figure-painting; Ewbank, Crawford, and Hill, landscapists; and William Simson, who worked with success in all three directions. Nicholson and H. W. Williams—the latter, who was in sympathy with the movement, died before the amalgamation was carried through—were water-colourists of repute long before that branch of art had taken much hold in Scotland. Samuel Joseph, John Stevens, and John Steell represented sculpture; Hamilton and Playfair, architecture; and Lizars, engraving. Considering that several men of talent had already followed Wilkie to London, the list of the Scottish Academicians in 1830 gives remarkable proof of the vitality of the movement which had flowered so suddenly during the first quarter of the century.

Amongst the painters enumerated one can trace without difficulty the diverse influences of the two founders of the school. The portrait-painters, quite naturally, adopt the technique of Raeburn, whilst the figure-painters of various *genres*, with the notable exception of David Scott, follow, more or less, the methods of Wilkie. Indeed, till nearly half a century later, the practice of these two great craftsmen forms the basis of Scottish painting in their respective spheres. It is curious to note that landscape-painters are comparatively few, but Thomson, no doubt, watched with interest from his suburban manse the rising art movement which culminated in the establishment of the Academy,

to the honorary membership of which he was elected shortly after its consolidation in 1830. The period immediately succeeding the establishment of the Academy was something of a golden age in the annals of Scottish Art. Not in any sordid sense of the term, though things had wonderfully changed for the better even in that way, but in the enthusiasm with which it was followed, and in the respect and reputation in which its professors were held by the public and the leading men of the city. This was attested in a very substantial way by one of the first acts of the young Academy—the purchase of the five large pictures by William Etty which, since its opening, have adorned the great room of the Scottish National Gallery; and by the increasing support given to the annual spring exhibitions, which soon came to be regarded as one of the attractions of the Edinburgh season.

CHAPTER VII

SUCCESSORS OF RAEBURN

The portrait-painters who worked in the Scottish capital or in Glasgow during the half-century after Raeburn's death were, as has been said, strongly influenced by the founder of the school. But, except in the case of George Watson, there is little of that direct imitation so often seen in the followers of a great master. Watson Gordon, Graham Gilbert, and Macnee, though their methods derive more or less from Raeburn, are men of strong and marked individuality, and, as a group, they compare favourably with the English successors of Reynolds and Gainsborough. George Watson was Raeburn's junior by only eleven years. From his having been chosen president both of the Associated Artists and of the Scottish Academy, he seems to have been a man of affairs; and this estimate is supported by the kindly yet shrewd countenance which confronts us in the portraits he has left of himself. After receiving some instruction from Alexander Nasmyth he worked for two years with Reynolds, and shortly afterwards commenced practice in Edinburgh. Raeburn, who had just returned from Rome, had the more important commissions, but, if one may judge from the catalogues of twenty years later, the younger artist would not be without his share.

His earlier work shows traces of his apprenticeship, and even as late as 1810 we find him exhibiting a picture entitled *Heads of Children*, evidently suggested by his former master's *Heads of Angels*, now in the National Gallery. But as time passes Sir Joshua's influence wanes, and Watson aims, not with entire success, at the vigorous touch and characterisation of Raeburn. In the absence of exhibitions, it is difficult to assign his earlier productions to their respective dates. A three-quarter length of *Sir George Stewart of Grandtully*, in loose scarlet coat, buff waistcoat and breeches, and powdered hair, is dated 1792. In design and arrangement it shows the influence of Reynolds, but in a three-quarter length, *William Smellie*,* which must belong to the years immediately succeeding, there is already in his treatment of a rather ungainly subject, a stiff and laboured version of Raeburn's broad and simple methods. Some ten or twelve years later in the portraits of his sons, John and William, we find, especially in the latter, the charm of boyhood rendered with a more facile and less imitative brush. From 1808 to 1813 he contributed largely to the exhibitions of the Associated Artists, and their catalogues, with those of the Royal Institution and—later—those of the Scottish Academy, give a fair idea of the nature of his work. Like the other members of the group he is essentially a portrait-painter, but, like most of them, he varies his exhibits with what one may call fancy subjects. *A Young Lady—effect of Candle-light*, *Children going to School*, *Young Lady at her Toilet*, are a few titles selected at random from the earlier catalogues, and when we turn to those of later years we find *The Hermit*, *A Jewish Doctor*, *The Female Ornithologist*. With such like fancies portrait-

* In the Scottish National Portrait Gallery.

painters have generally varied their practice, and their frequency or rarity may be accepted as a tolerably fair gauge of the fulness or slackness of commissions. With Raeburn they hardly occur at all, with Watson they are more or less frequent all through his professional career; but neither in his case nor with the others under consideration do such occasional raids on the domain of the figure-painter imply anything of the versatility of those greater masters who seem unable to confine themselves to any one branch.

To return to the artist's work, we have in 1810 the *Heads of Children* already referred to, and two years later a portrait of the eccentric *Archie Skirving*, possibly the half-length now in the Scottish National Gallery, though another has come under the observation of the writer. The former represents a handsome man of aquiline-featured type, clean shaven and fresh-coloured. His longish fair hair, slightly grizzled, and linen in some dishabille, mark the Bohemian character ascribed to him; but in respect of artistic treatment, the painter can hardly be said to have risen to the opportunities so picturesque a subject afforded. A few years later in his *Benjamin West*,* Watson reaches his high-water mark. It is a half-length with the figure, seen almost in profile, relieved against a canvas on which one or two painted figures are dimly visible. In coat of dark brown, and with right hand on a thin calf-bound volume, the President faces round as if with attention suddenly arrested. Here the character of the compact, square-built head is rendered with appropriate vivacity, and a technique free from the heaviness which so often mars his work when he essays this Raeburn-like handling. The

* In the National Gallery of Scotland.

scheme is reticent throughout, a touch of blue on the right sleeve being all the painter has allowed himself in the way of positive colour. The sober harmonies are everywhere subordinated to the personality which dominates this fine canvas, the most notable of the painter's achievements. Though the influence of Raeburn is felt, it is not too obvious. For comparatively few of his works can as much be said. All through, his method alternates between the smooth, insipid manner of the *Skirving* and a heavy-handed imitation of the Scottish master. Only on rare occasions does he attain to the personal note which marks the *Benjamin West*. He was a frequent exhibitor at the Royal Academy, and, on account of the impression he made there, he was invited to London about 1815, on which occasion he painted the portraits of the *Dean of Canterbury*, *Lord and Lady Combermere*, and the characteristic *West* described above.

George Watson followed Raeburn so closely that he may almost be called a contemporary. The product of the same age, his training differed from that of the greater painter in one important particular—there are no student years in Italy. The fact is interesting; it marks the close of an old order. With those born towards the end of the century the Roman apprenticeship is no longer an article of faith.

George Watson's nephew, afterwards Sir John Watson Gordon, is generally recognised as the ablest of those who may more strictly be called successors of Raeburn, that is, of those who took up his practice and carried his traditions well into the second half of the nineteenth century. A pupil of Graham, Watson's ambition was to be, like his master, a painter of history. Accordingly we find

him making his *début* at the first exhibition of the Associated Artists with a *Historical Picture*. The year following —1809—he takes higher ground, *The Battle of Bannockburn*, with a long descriptive title, and *Queen Mary forced to Abdicate the Crown*, similarly set forth in a quotation from Robertson's "History of Scotland," figuring amongst his contributions. With John it is no mere varying portrait work with fancy subjects, as in the case of his uncle and others. He sticks gallantly to his guns, and all through the society's exhibitions, to which his contributions were numerous, while there is little mention of portraiture, we have from his brush the stock subjects of the history man of the period. After 1821, however, Watson is fairly launched on portrait-painting, and ten years later, at the Scottish Academy, he says good-bye to such themes with *The Knight of the Leopard's Dog seizing the Marquis of Montserrat*. From the date of Raeburn's death, indeed, he had been recognised as his successor, and for the next forty years he fills the *rôle* and carries on the traditions of the founder of the school. An equal success attends him through life. A member of the reconstructed Scottish Academy in 1830, he was elected to the Associateship of the Royal Academy in 1841, and nine years later he attained full honours. The same year he succeeded Sir William Allan as President of the Royal Scottish Academy. For fourteen years more he worked with unabated vigour, and died, also like Raeburn, with faculties unimpaired, though nearly ten years older.

The early subject and fancy pictures are little known. *A Grandfather's Lesson*, his diploma-picture, was virtually a portrait of his father, handkerchief on knee, acting tutor to a fair-haired little girl. Painted in the bituminous

style popular at the time, it has been withdrawn from exhibition. In the small *Laird of Cockpen*, in the Dundee Albert Institute, there is more of the subject composition, and considerable spirit is displayed in the rendering of a well-known Scottish song. From the catalogues of the Royal Institution and of the Scottish Academy one can get a fair idea of the sequence of Watson Gordon's portraiture. Fortunately, he departs from Raeburn's irritating and almost universal practice of giving only such titles as *Portrait of a Lady*, of a *Nobleman*, of a *Gentleman*, and his work represents as completely the society and notabilities of the day, including the nobility of every rank in their official or private capacities, great soldiers and sailors—survivors of the Napoleonic wars—governors and administrators of colonies and dependencies. The Church, the College of Justice, and the Universities contribute many distinguished names. Sir Walter and the lesser lights who came after him are there, with shrewd provosts, notable merchants, and distinguished professors of his own craft. In these Watson Gordon's record is hardly inferior to that of the earlier master. His female portraiture scarcely adds to his reputation, but it was by no means insignificant in bulk. One such, *The Baroness Nairne and Son*, in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, may be attributed to the years 1810–15. The picture is a half-length, and the sweet singer of the Jacobite movement is seated at an angle between profile and three-quarters. A book closed over the right forefinger is on her knee, and with the left arm she clasps her boy, who is seen full front. Her dress is of dark plum colour, and a lace cap frames in a face of pale complexion to which dark, wide-open eyes impart a

dreamy, wistful expression. The technique, though capable, is immature, with little sign as yet of the painter's later characteristics. Another, signed 1819, *Miss Watson*,* afterwards Mrs. Campbell, depicts a young lady of fair complexion, blue-grey eyes, and light brown curls clustered low on the temples. Her dark dress is cut low with short sleeves. There is a glint of gold necklet, and a fold of yellow scarf crosses the gloved right arm. The flesh, almost shadowless, is painted with a fine fusion of half-tones, and in a pretty equal impasto. Here the subject is more attractive, and one might have predicted, from its sympathetic rendering, a successful career as a painter of the sex.

The half-length of *Dr. Andrew Duncan*,† Professor of Medicine at the University from 1783 to 1819, may belong to about the same date. Here we recognise the later Sir John in embryo. The arrangement is simple and the character well expressed. It is low-toned and lacks glow of colour. The full length of *Lord President Hope* in the Signet Library, exhibited in 1832, is a typical example of his middle period. The grave demeanour of the Lord President accords well with the robes of red and ermine. The head is modelled and the character admirably rendered through a skilful use of half-tones, the pronounced shadows being confined to the markings under nose, brow, and chin, which are keen and quick; an adaptation of a certain phase of Raeburn's practice. In many of the artist's works, this breadth of half-tone, not of the finest quality, involves the something of dulness referred to above. Here it is scarcely felt, for the scheme

* In the possession of Miss Campbell, Edinburgh.

† At the University, Edinburgh.

of lights and darks has been so arranged as to make the head tell strongly against a sombre and rather forced background of the Parliament House colonnade and square. Hudson's advice to his pupils: "Remember the candlestick and the candle; let the head be the flame," has not been forgotten.

After this date the tendency is towards a simpler style, and a more natural lighting. A portrait-painter in full employment cannot afford to waste his time in experimenting; he must adopt a formula. Under such conditions mannerisms are wont to appear, and it is so with Watson Gordon. Fortunately, the manly vigour of his work keeps them from asserting themselves unpleasantly, nor do they hinder him from reaching his highest achievements late in life. The run of his work is slighter—more superficial, one would say—but such portraits as *Lord Cockburn*, *The Provost of Peterhead*, and *David Cox* show that his interest needs only to be aroused by some more than usually congenial subject to call forth an art more accomplished, though more reticent, than he wielded in his earlier prime. The beginnings of a more robust and natural manner can be traced back to the portraits of *Scott*, painted for Cadell in 1830, and of *The Ettrick Shepherd* in the possession of Messrs. Blackwood. These have a good deal in common, and the probability is that they are products of about the same date. Both are seen full front and to the knee, both are seated, in much the same attitude, with hands rested on the crooks of their walking-sticks. Sir Walter, in coat of invisible green, pale buff vest and black stock, is posed against a shadowed wall, with a strip of low-toned sky and landscape suggestive of Tweed and Eildon. The massive head with locks

now silver grey is finely modelled, and the gradations of the flesh are rendered with the artist's usual deftness of touch. The incisive level shadows which mark the deep-set eyes are given with great spirit, and the painting throughout is with a full brush, and a material, in parts, a little dense and heavy. The head and fore-quarters of a staghound at the minstrel's left knee are brushed in with a master hand. Hogg's portrait is, in some ways, even more interesting, for an effect, unusual with the artist, has been chosen. The shepherd, swathed in the ample folds of his plaid, is set against a leafy background of some "dell without a name." The rugged homely features are mostly in broad shadow, and the slightly-parted lips, weathered complexion, and sandy-coloured hair, are rendered with that easy picturesque touch, which became to Watson Gordon what the hatchet-like modelling was to Raeburn—an invaluable instrument for the seizure of character. In the same "old saloon" at 45 George Street, but separated from it by an interval of more than twenty years, there hangs a portrait of his companion of the *Noctes*—*John Wilson*—no longer the "Christopher" of the ambrosial nights, but the Professor of Moral Philosophy in his later years, with eye somewhat dimmed and natural force abated. Here the leonine head and dishevelled yellow hair, only slightly touched by his sixty-eight years, are treated in the painter's more conventional manner. It is signed, and dated 1852, and it is instructive thus to be able to compare the earlier and the later manners of the painter in two of his most picturesque and eminent sitters.

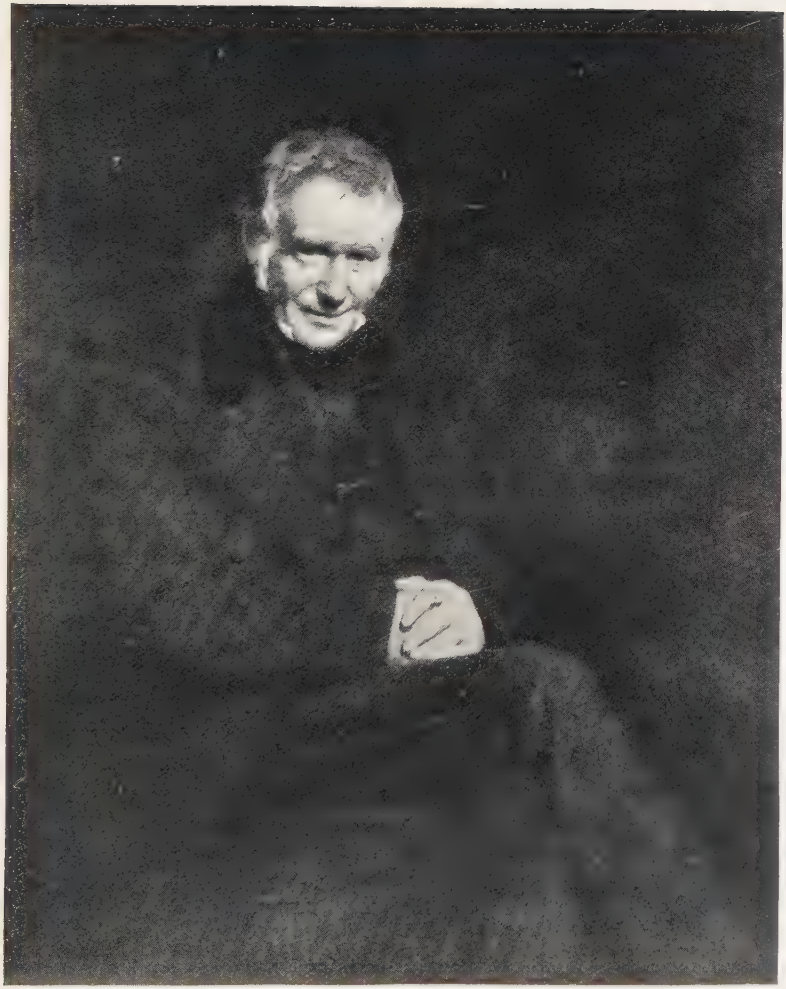
The full length of *Lord Cockburn** (1853), the seated three-quarter lengths of *Roderick Gray, Provost of Peter-*

* In the Scottish National Portrait Gallery.

head (1854), and of *David Cox* painted the following year, represent the artist at his best. The subjects no longer pose like the *Dalhousie* at the Archers' Hall, nor confront us in one or other of the familiar attitudes, the stock-in-trade of portrait-painters. Some characteristic has been noted, some familiar aspect, expression, or gesture admits us to the inner sanctuary of the sitter's personality. In the first, the tall, spare figure of Cockburn is set against the tree-stems and russet foliage of his own Bonaly. The venerable senator wears the black cut-away coat and close-fitting trousers of the period. Placed at an angle to the spectator and with hands behind his back, he regards us with the look of one hardly awakened from some abstract train of thought. The finely-formed head is bald over the brow, the kindly eyes are of a deep hazel, and the features, though scarcely handsome, bear the impress of a life moulded by sweet and healthy influences. All this has been suggested by the artist with a felicity and reticence which leave little to be desired. The touch is soft and full, and the modelling, especially of the lower parts of the face, is achieved with that mingled ease and completion which leave in the finished work something of the spontaneity of a sketch. The painting of the figure recalls Raeburn at his best. With a great scumble of semi-transparent pigment and a few well-directed markings to give form and sheen, the broadcloth suit is brushed in and accented with a touch of creamy-white neckcloth. The conventional background of pillar and curtain has been discarded for an abstract of Bonaly policies with a shoulder of the Pentland and a sky of blue-grey clouds.

The Provost of Peterhead * shows all the subtle charac-

* In the possession of the Merchant Company, Edinburgh.



RODERICK GRAY, ESQ., PROVOST OF PETERHEAD
By Sir John Watson Gordon, P.R.S.A., R.A.
THE PROPERTY OF THE MERCHANT COMPANY OF EDINBURGH

terisation of the *Cockburn*. The painter has again been fortunate in his subject, though the type is widely different. The portrait, one reads, was presented to Mr. Gray by the Merchant Company as a recognition of the services he had rendered in the management of their Aberdeenshire properties. One can well understand it. Behind the good-humoured expression of the deep-set eyes there is a sufficiency of the hard-headed Aberdonian; shrewdness and caution are writ large on the rugged features, with that sense of leisureliness which inspires confidence; he may go about things in his own way, but few opportunities will escape him. The very attitude one feels is habitual – cross-legged, with fingers interlaced on the knee and body well stooped forward. Just so in many an interview or three-cornered talk he has advanced the company's affairs. It is a masterpiece of character, and, as always in such creations, the means are simple and appropriate. The accumulated knowledge of forty years is summed up in these apparently easy markings and gradations whose combination gives perfect relief to the homely features of the north-country lawyer. Here, by a happy chance, all Sir John's excellences are seen at their best, and his defects are little in evidence. For a painter approaching the three-score and ten it is astonishingly virile. And this quality was sustained not only in his fine portrait of *David Cox* of the following year, but till he was well over the allotted span of life.

Though founded on Raeburn's broad manner of seeing, Watson Gordon evolved a technique peculiar to himself. From beginning to end he borrows little from his predecessor in this respect; his handling is as distinct in the portraits of *Mr. Hcaltic* and *Mrs. Campbell,* signed 1819,

as in those of the later fifties. There is neither the mosaic-like laying together of planes of Raeburn's early practice, nor the richer fusion of his full development; but a method which never quite gets rid of a picturesque incompletion. This is why he succeeds best where the character of his sitter has been well accented by the wear and tear of life, and, for the same reason, he fails as an exponent of the charm and grace of womanhood. His shortcoming in this department is of itself sufficient to place him in a lower rank than Raeburn and the great English painters of the eighteenth century; but even on his own ground he is not their equal. As a colourist he is their inferior both as respects arrangement of the masses and in quality (the term implies that which imparts to the tints the palpitating or go-and-come aspect we are familiar with in nature). In regard to the former, he and his contemporaries fell on evil times, for, in male attire at least, the respectable black had already superseded the variety of costume of the preceding generations. For a while a remnant of the picturesque was left in frills and ruffles of neckcloth and wristband, but the advent of the black stock soon completed the triumph of monotone. When the full side-whiskers came into fashion, and when they were dark, or dyed black as they often look, one cannot but pity the plight of the unfortunate artists who had to face such a problem. True, there were the official portraits, but the uniform of the services, and the ofttimes crude trappings of provosts and magistrates, were a poor substitute for the claret and puce, the dull greens and rich browns of the eighteenth, or even for the blue and buff of the early nineteenth centuries. It says much for the Scottish painters that they were able to avoid the slightly dandified airs of the successors of Lawrence during

the William IV. and early Victorian period. Colour-schemes were, in truth, well nigh impossible in the ordinary male portraiture of those days; but to the painter with a keen sense of "quality" the monotone of black broadcloth has no terrors. One has only to think of what the Venetians, Velasquez, and the great Dutchmen have made of their "gentlemen in Black" to be convinced of this; and though the cut-away coat and formless nether garments of his day rendered the task more arduous, Watson Gordon, when at his best, deals with the problem not unsuccessfully. Both in the *Lord Cockburn* and *Roderick Gray* the treatment of the drapery is quite masterly. There is nothing in either case of the inky or blue-black which so repels us in some contemporary work, and from which his own is at times not altogether free, nor of the clotting of surface characteristic of more modern methods. In this respect he follows the best traditions of the great masters in a manner closely akin to that of Raeburn. The broad scumble of olive-toned material over an umber ground is grateful to the eye, harmonising at once with flesh and background, and the markings which denote form or fold are laid down with a touch so suave and sure that its restfulness is undisturbed by the completion thus secured. In the all-important matter of flesh-painting his inferiority is more marked, for even at his best it lacks the inner glow which gives vitality to the countenance and makes it dominate its surroundings. His half-tones are often heavy, and the transition greys of an unpleasant bluish-black. He is said to have mixed bath-brick with his colour, as Muller used chalk, and something of the dulness of that material cleaves to his paint. From the full consequences of such defects, his grasp of character and the pictorial touch and treatment

by which it is attained save him, and in its best manifestations his technique very nearly equals in its results the more complete fusion of the greater masters.

Of the three portrait-painters born in the last decade of the eighteenth century, and who may be regarded as contemporaries of Watson Gordon, John Graham (better known as John Graham Gilbert) is undoubtedly the ablest —the only one, indeed, who may be said from some points of view to challenge Sir John's premier position. Like another of the trio, Colvin Smith, he supplemented his training at the Royal Academy with a year or two's study in Italy. But the two generations which had elapsed since the days of More and Hamilton had materially changed the purport of the Scottish students' visit to the peninsula. They no longer pay homage to the successors of Masucci and Imperiali; and in place of occupying themselves on such subjects as *Nausicaa and Ulysses* or *Agrippina with the Ashes of Germanicus*, they devote themselves to the study of the great masters. To this Graham added the portrayal of subjects from contemporary Italian life. Amongst his earliest contributions to the exhibitions of the Royal Institution we find such titles as *Lady in Venetian Dress*, *A Bandit of the Alps*, *Italian Lady*. These and the *Rebecca*, sent to the first exhibition of the Dilettanti Society of Glasgow in 1828, reflected the romantic influence of Scott and Byron, and, though his true strength lay in portraiture, he hankered after such subjects to the end. His first visit to Italy was followed by three or four years in London, but in 1827 we find him settled in Edinburgh and taking part in the art movements then stirring the modern Athens.

From such a training there resulted, as was to be expected, a style differing considerably from that of the

Watson family. The Raeburn influence is less evident. The earliest work which has come under the writer's notice, is the three-quarter length portrait of *William Murdoch*,* the inventor of gas illumination. Here the difference from the early works of Raeburn and the Watsons is strongly pronounced. Instead of a thin somewhat starved material and narrow shadows, we find the handsome features and dignified mien of the great innovator presented to us through a technique which has caught something of the softer shadows and fuller fusion of the Venetians. In this work, which must belong to the years spent in London, and more notably in the portrait of *James Hamilton*,† the artist has united his mellower scheme with a characterisation he did not always attain in after years. The latter, painted in 1826, has a rare individuality. Seated in easy posture, Hamilton recalls to us a type of those days—a survival of a yet earlier generation—who, in his youth, may have trod the plainstanes and mixed "the genuine stuff" with Captain Paton of blessed memory. The quaint upward glance, the curiously arched eyebrows and low forehead on which droop brown locks of hair, or wig, have been observed and rendered with an intimacy rarely excelled. The varied browns and olives of riding dress and accessories show to advantage the weathered features, which by contrast beam with a ruddy glow, while the note of deep crimson in chair and table-cover, the keen white of cravat and duller whites of the documents on the table, save the arrangement from monotony. This portrait, by a fortunate combination of picturesque sitter, painter-like treatment, and a happy

* In the possession of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

† In the Kelvingrove Museum, Glasgow.

choice of scheme, seems to stand apart in the artist's practice. More accomplished achievement we certainly have in the *Gibson* and *Watson Gordon* of his later prime, but nothing quite on the lines of this early work, which has a gusto and verve of handling all its own.

In Lord Kingsburgh's collection are several examples which show strongly the Italian influence. These include *The Love Letter*, *Lady Drawing*, and various smaller fancy subjects. The first is characteristic of Graham's work in this vein. It was exhibited at the Royal Institution in 1829, and represents a young girl of fine Italian type, who has fled to some shady garden nook the better to enjoy the missive just received. She wears the wide-sleeved white dress and red-laced corset so often called into requisition by the artist, and leans an elbow on a low pedestal as she reads. A half-amused half-mischievous expression pervades the handsome features, and one does not altogether envy the original of the miniature which lies by the softly rounded arm. The effect is the fascinating one of broad shadow, which suits so well this class of subject, and the various reflected and transmitted lights, the direct illumination on cheek and shoulder, and the deep Venetian red of the bodice make a fine symphony with dark hair, luminous shadow, and the russet foliage of the background. The Italian dress is used in portraits of *Miss Agnes Hume* and *Mrs. Elizabeth Hume*—the latter with a guitar—whilst in the three-quarter length of a *Lady Drawing* the effect as well as the dress of *The Love Letter* is repeated. If this is the picture exhibited under that title in 1850, it shows how the artist clung to this nature of subject. The technique of these works differs considerably. In *The Love Letter* the breadth of shadow

THE LOVE LETTER

By John Graham-Gilbert, R.S.A.

THE PROPERTY OF LORD KINGSBURGH

is wrought with scumbles over a fairly solid under-painting. Viewed closely the colour thus attained is of no very fine quality, and the modelling also seems inadequate; but at a few yards distance, so skilfully have the means been calculated, the surface is complete and the flesh glows and palpitates. In the two portraits, where there is comparatively little shadow, the flesh painting is of an equal and heavier consistency, and the construction is little indicated by the brushwork, thus differing from the normal Scottish practice of the period.

In the early thirties Mr. Graham transferred his studio to Glasgow, and the West of Scotland was thenceforth his headquarters. By his marriage to Miss Gilbert, and her succession to her uncle's estate of Yorkhill shortly thereafter, the artist was placed in a position which enabled him during the next fifteen years to make frequent visits to the Continent, and to devote himself mostly to the production of subject-pictures of the nature already indicated. Happily portraiture does not altogether disappear, for to these years may be assigned various fine examples of both sexes, and in 1847 we have the bust portrait of *John Gibson* in the Scottish National Gallery. This quiet and reticent presentment of the sculptor of *The tinted Venus* is one of the artist's finest achievements. It is simple in the extreme. Gibson is seen full front in the black dress and stock of the period. Though approaching sixty at the time, his hair is still dark and abundant. The face has a modified ruggedness of feature, the eyes are brown, the mouth firmly compressed, and there is about the arrangement of hair and dress an artistic *négligé*, which distinguishes it from the ordinary "portrait of a gentleman." The linen, exposed by a well-opened vest,

and the glint of collar tell as the highest lights in a sober scheme which is completed by a background of deep olive. In regard to treatment, the artist has adopted a lighting which illumines the expanse of linen, while mingling shadow and half-tone with the lights of the flesh. It is in the skill with which this is accomplished that the mastery of the picture consists. Graham Gilbert here uses a method unlike that of Raeburn or Watson Gordon. The way the umber shadows interlace with the half-tones suggests everywhere infinity of gradation, and the fuller impasto of the lights is so applied as to give grain to the varied surfaces of the skin. The work is nowhere what artists call tight, and its openness of fibre has much of the charm attained in more recent times by means of broken colour. In his full-length portrait of *Sir John Watson Gordon* the difference of method is less marked; indeed, Graham Gilbert's manner here curiously approximates to that of his subject. The President, who is in court dress, fronts the spectator in easy posture, but turns the head with a slightly upward movement so as to face the light. This ordinary effect, with its narrow shadows, is that usually adopted by Sir John, and implied a more solid modelling than had been employed in the Gibson. So there is less of the interlacing and scumbling of umbers and half-tones, and a breadth of impasto handled in a manner which recalls Watson Gordon's picturesque touch. If there is not all the descriptiveness of Sir John at his best, the colour is more luminous and free from those leaden half-tones which so often mar the handiwork of the President. For the rest, the work is of great spirit. The court costume with its frills and ruffles is a welcome change from the broadcloth of the period and goes well with the breadth

of shadowed wall, the rich carpet and looped curtain which furnish the colour-notes in a dignified arrangement.

In female portraiture Graham Gilbert is more successful than Watson Gordon. His softer brush suits better the more refined modelling and delicate gradations of complexion. Sometimes, indeed, in his more highly finished work, completion of surface is attained at the expense of more valuable qualities, and the painter is perhaps at his best where a slightly looser style has been adopted, as in the bust portrait of *Lady Southampton*.* Here the easy modelling of the flesh and the picturesque treatment of the stray ringlets and the accessories of the dress give an additional charm to the fine features and winsome expression of the young countess. This grace of spontaneity is apt to evaporate in the more highly finished work, of which the half-length of his wife at Yorkhill may be taken as a representative example. One misses the ease and fluency of the *Lady Southampton*, but the method seems to suit the smooth skin and regular features of Mrs. Gilbert's type of beauty; and the modelling, especially of the lower part of the face, combines finish with a sensitive rendering of the flesh.

The qualities which differentiate Graham Gilbert from his Scottish contemporaries have been indicated in the comparisons already made. His average portraiture falls short of that of his formidable rival. Preoccupied with colour and fusion of surface, he fails sufficiently to note the underlying structure which gives individuality to form and feature. In drapery his treatment of black is less satisfactory than that of Raeburn or Watson Gordon. It has neither their grateful warmth of tone, nor does he observe

* In the possession of Colonel Gordon Gilmour, The Inch.

so carefully or express so simply that incidence of light on it which gives form to the mass. The *Gibson* illustrates both shortcomings. In his fancy figures and in his portraits of ladies he sometimes introduced a landscape background reminiscent of the Venetians, where a precision in the masses of leafage and the drawing of tree stems differs widely from the loosely expressed abstracts used by Raeburn and, with modifications, by his followers.

Colvin Smith and William Smellie Watson, whose lives were almost exactly contemporaneous, represent in their training the two tendencies at work during this transition period. The former supplemented his years of study at the Royal Academy with a lengthened visit to the Continent, whilst the latter, true to the traditions of his family, contented himself with what was to be had within the four seas of Britain. Of the two, Colvin Smith takes the more prominent position. Establishing himself in Raeburn's studio shortly before the founding of the Scottish Academy he succeeded before long in attracting to the historic painting-room a large *clientèle*. He was one of those who seceded from the Institution in 1830, and he continued a zealous supporter of the Academy throughout his long professional career. Watson, as was natural, followed his father's lead, and was a member of the Academy from its commencement. Like him, he varies his contributions with fancy subjects, possibly from the same cause. Neither can be said to come into the front rank of Scottish portrait-painters, and though Smith, now and again, gives evidence of much ability, he stops short of anything that can be set alongside the best work of Watson Gordon or Graham Gilbert. He places his subjects well on the canvas, his treatment of light and shade is broad and simple, and his

brushing painter-like; but his colour in the flesh alternates betwixt a ruddy low tone, as in the portraits of *Lord Pitmilly* and *John Clerk of Eldin* in the Parliament Hall, and the rather earthy impasto of his *Lord Jeffrey* and *President Hope* in the Queen Street Galleries. The three-quarter length of *Sir James Gibson Craig of Riccarton* at the Signet Library is better. It is painted in a strong scheme of black, umber, and yellow, and though the flesh is low toned, a pretty decided chiaroscuro, with the buff and white of vest and neckcloth, gives variety to the arrangement. In full lengths, of which he painted many, Smith's qualities of simplicity and breadth stand him in good stead, whilst his defects as a colourist, and want of the more delicate shades of modelling are less felt. In such he shows to great advantage in *Robert Ferguson of Raith*,* *the Earl of Lauderdale in his Robes of the Order of the Thistle*,† and *Sir James Spittal*, as Lord Provost of Edinburgh.‡ The colour scheme supplied by the official dress in the last-named seems to have induced a finer quality throughout; the portrait holds its own with good examples of Watson Gordon and Graham Gilbert in the same room.

Smellie Watson is less known than the other members of the group. Neither at the Mound nor at Kelvingrove does his name appear in the catalogue; but in the Queen Street Galleries he is represented by a three-quarter length of *George Thomson*, the well-known correspondent of Robert Burns, and at the Scottish Academy there is a bust portrait of *William Nicholson*, and a half-length of himself. This last shows a head less strongly moulded, but of somewhat

* In the possession of R. Munro Ferguson, Esq., of Raith.

† In the possession of the Marquis of Tweeddale.

‡ In the Council Chambers, Edinburgh.

similar type to that of his relative Sir John. It is painted with considerable spirit, and in its monotonic scheme, which also characterises his general practice, it shows more the influence of his cousin's later manner than of his father or Raeburn. His fancy and subject pictures are rarely seen, and scarcely add to his reputation. He was a keen ornithologist, and bequeathed his collection of birds to the Edinburgh University Museum.

John Syme was more directly influenced by Raeburn than the other portraitists of the first half of the century. This is hardly to be wondered at, seeing he is said to have been in his youth an assistant at 32 York Place. There is some obscurity concerning the extent to which Raeburn availed himself of the services of assistants. To judge from internal evidence, one would say very little, but at all events it is known that Syme finished what was left in the studio at his death. When his name first appears in the catalogue of the Associated Society in 1812, and for many years afterwards, he hails from the same address as his uncle, Patrick Syme, a flower-painter. In 1825, however, we find John, whose earliest contributions had been of the same *genre*, in full practice as a portrait-painter and established in Abercomby Place. For a considerable time he had a large and, to judge from the names, a lucrative practice, no doubt due in part to his association with Raeburn, but towards the later thirties it begins to fall off. His contributions to the Academy's exhibitions are fewer, and subject-pictures more and more take the place of portraits. Either his stronger contemporaries supplanted him in the more lucrative walk, or having made enough, he preferred the quieter life of the subject and landscape painter. As is the case with Smellie Watson,

his work is not much seen in our public galleries. His half-length of the *Rev. John Barclay* at the Mound is a good example and shows strongly the influence of Raeburn—strange to say, more of the Raeburn of an earlier time than of the period during which he had been associated with him. It looks as if the fuller qualities of the master's later years being beyond his reach, he had fallen back on the thinner, more mosaic-like manner of his first period. There is good character in the not very handsome features of the reverend doctor, whose scientific leanings are indicated by the skull on the table beside him; and the flat surfaces and narrow shadows express well the form, though the want of half-tones deprives the near side of the face of the salience one could desire. His bust portrait of himself, belonging to the Scottish Academy—painted probably about 1840—shows him to greater advantage, or at least in a more individual manner.

Two others fall to be noted whose work was of a different nature, William Nicholson and William Yellowlees. Nicholson belonged to Newcastle, but about 1814 we find him settled in Edinburgh and contributing largely to the later exhibitions of the Associated Artists. In 1821 his name reappears in the catalogue of the Institution, one of his contributions to that year's exhibition being a portrait of *William Allan in Tartar Costume*. His best work, which was on a small scale and in water-colour, will be noted later. Yellowlees, known as the "Raeburn in little," worked on the same scale, but in oil. His work is little known, and much of it is in anything but good condition, he also having fallen a victim to the abuse of bitumen. The bust portrait of *Mr. John Jamieson* in the Queen Street galleries is a fairly good example, and

both in handling and effect sufficiently justifies the title he has earned. Of several characteristic works in the possession of his nephew, Mr. Yellowlees, Selkirk, those of the artist's father and mother, that of the *Earl of Buchan*, and one of a *Miss Burns*—afterwards Mrs. Pender—are the best. The female portraits especially are strongly reminiscent of Raeburn, if one can fancy his rendering of character and the direct touch by which it is attained on this diminutive scale. The *Earl of Buchan* has more individuality. The head, of fine aquiline type, is modelled with strong and sensitive touch, whilst the long grey hair and the accessories of the costume give picturesqueness to the subject.

Of those already enumerated, only Watson Gordon and Graham Gilbert can be said to have added anything to the equipment of the school, but the others show the value of a fine tradition in sustaining the man of average talent and saving his work from the trivialities into which portrait-painting is apt to drift. Five of these successors of Raeburn came, as it were, in a bunch. The years 1794-6 cover their birth dates, but seven and ten years elapse ere the succession is continued in two painters who attained to the highest honours art has to bestow, in England and Scotland respectively. Francis Grant was born in 1803 and Daniel Macnee three years later. Their youth and early professional life differed widely. A younger son of the laird of Kilgraston, in Perthshire, Grant is mentioned by Sir Walter Scott as dividing his time between fox-hunting and similar sports and painting. Whilst studying law in Edinburgh he had developed a predilection for art, and stirred, no doubt, by the movements of the time, he abandoned the career, then the

mainstay of younger sons of the nobility and gentry, and took up art seriously. His talent and progress were such that the fortune he had hoped to make at the Bar came early to him in the hardly less lucrative profession of portrait-painting. He was one of those admitted to the Scottish Academy in 1830, but about 1834 he transferred his headquarters to London, where his aristocratic connection and love of sport soon brought him fame and fortune. Macnee began differently. Early deprived of his father, he had to *fend* for himself in the Kirkgate of Glasgow with Horatio Macculloch and W. L. Leitch as companions. Nevertheless, by indomitable perseverance, doing whatever came in his way—chalk heads at a few shillings apiece, anatomical drawings for doctors, and illustrations for engravers—he fought his way into the front rank of native portrait-painters; so that, long ere they had attained their highest honours, the names of these two Scotsmen are bracketed by Théophile Gautier in his critique of the Paris International of 1855, *Les Beaux Arts en Europe* Alluding to Macnee's *Dr. Wardlaw*, the distinguished art critic remarks, "M. Macnee nous parait, avec M. Grant le meilleur portraitiste de l'école Anglaise, si nous en jugeons sur cette échantillon unique; car c'est l'unique toile que l'artiste ait envoyée a l'Exposition, et nous le regrettons."

Grant retained through life the characteristics indicated in Sir Walter's early reference to him. When at the top of his profession as a fashionable portrait-painter, and even when the cares and responsibilities of the Presidentship were laid on him, Sir Francis divided his time between painting and fox-hunting. He lived and died, not as other presidents, but curiously combining

the *rôle* of a Reynolds with that of a Lowther or an Anstruther Thomson. Such a life is far removed from the artist's ideal, and it is small wonder that it is reflected in his work. Scott, in the passage already quoted from, says: "He used to avow his intention to spend his patrimony—about £10,000—and then again to make his fortune by law. The first he soon accomplished. But the law is not a profession so easily acquired, nor did Frank's talents lie in that direction. His passion for painting turned out better." And, indeed, in these representations of the Squiredom of England, whether with their hunting cobs in the open, or lounging in groups at Melton Mowbray breakfasts, one feels the superficiality of the man intent on replacing the vanished patrimony, rather than the serious and searching endeavour of the artist.

But that Grant had great talent there is not a doubt, and the wonder is, not that his average work is slight and his personages somewhat dandified, but that his faculty was not more seriously affected by so extraordinary an environment. As often happens in such cases, it is in his less important works that he reveals himself as a painter. His name first appears in the catalogue of the Royal Institution in 1829, his contributions consisting of several portraits of ladies and one of a *Polish Jew*. This is, no doubt, the canvas given as his diploma picture and designated *Jew Rabbi* in the Scottish Academy's catalogue of their art property. A note is there appended to the effect that, on being shown the picture a few years before his death, Sir Francis declared that it was his second essay in oil-painting. The handling is laboured and his brush tends to clot, but it is a remarkable performance for a second attempt in the medium. One or two small

THE COUNTESS OF CHESTERFIELD AND THE HON. MRS. ANSON

By Sir Francis Grant, *P.*R.A., *H.*R.S.A.

THE PROPERTY OF COL. GORDON GILMOUR, THE INCH

canvases in the possession of Colonel Gordon Gilmour, at The Inch, better illustrate the artistic equipment and fine perceptions of the young painter. In one, *Lady Eleanor Lowther*, in a voluminous red habit and curious black hat with projecting front, is seated on her dapple grey. The horse, painted with great spirit, is seen in profile against russet foliage. But it is in the dainty treatment of the head that Grant here shows his measure, for the comely face, seen in three-quarters, is painted with a delightfully sympathetic touch. Though not more than an inch and a quarter from brow to chin, the features of the young sportswoman are rendered with that combined ease and finish which, whatever the scale, mark the master of his craft. There is a singular charm about this fresh countenance with dark curls and arched brows, to which the quaint head-dress and rather ungainly costume add piquancy. Still more interesting is the little upright sketch of two beautiful sisters, the *Hon. Mrs. George Anson* and the *Countess of Chesterfield*. Nothing could well be more graceful in arrangement, and, both in the highly-wrought heads and the more loosely-treated costume Grant shows himself an accomplished craftsman. If in the features of the seated girl there is a trace of the miniaturist, it is only a trace. The other face is free from this objection, and the incidence of light on the fair complexion is more artistically rendered. The painting of the right arm, swathed in its film of gauze, and of the hand arranging the cherry-coloured scarf, has all the sympathetic fluency of touch that characterises the true brushman. Various other pictures and sketches at The Inch show Grant in his sporting vein.

In 1831 and 1832 we find him represented at the

Scottish Academy by a goodly number of portraits, both male and female. Amongst those of the latter year is the small full length of Scott in his study at Abbotsford, one of the last, if not the last, of the portraits enumerated by Lockhart. It is far from happy, and reflects only too clearly, in jaded figure and listless expression, that

"trouble not of clouds or weeping rain"

which already overshadowed the abode of the author of "Waverley." In 1833 his contributions include the curious picture now in the possession of Sir David Baird, Newbyth—*The First Meeting of the North Berwick Golf Club*—where we have some seven or eight of the original members, with attendant caddies, teeing, holing out, lounging and squatting about the green—even attending to the creature comforts in a manner fitted to scandalise modern exponents of the royal game. The figures are awkwardly grouped, and some of them seem strangely out of scale. Altogether it is more interesting from its subject than pictorially. This year also closes for a lengthened period Grant's associations with the Scottish Academy. When his name next appears in their catalogue in 1852, it is with the letters R.A. appended. He was elected Associate of the Royal Academy in 1842, Academician in 1851, and President on the death of Sir Charles Eastlake in 1866.

Grant's career in the metropolis became more and more that of the successful portrait-painter. The sporting pictures with which he continued to vary his early contributions to the Royal Academy soon gave place to the more conventional canvases in which the nobility and gentry are delineated on the scale for which they were able, and willing, to pay. The recovery of the lost patrimony—and much

more—was soon assured, but it is questionable whether the painter made the most of those qualities with which he was so richly endowed, and which are so charmingly displayed in the little pictures at The Inch. He seems to have worked with great energy and industry, and many notable portraits came from his hand. Our public galleries contain various examples. In the National Portrait Gallery there are some half-dozen, including a finely modelled head of himself; in the Scottish Portrait Gallery there is a portrait of his brother, *Sir Hope Grant*, as Colonel of the 9th Lancers; in the Kelvingrove Museum a seated full-length of *Sir Andrew Orr*, and in the Dundee Albert Institute a full-length of *Mr. Francis Mollison*. These, with the three-quarter length of *Walter Little Gilmour* at The Inch, give a sufficient idea of his average work. All show the man of talent, the last-named—which must have been painted during his earlier London period—if not very fine in colour, is broad and simple in treatment; the Dundee picture has better colour, but the tall fashionably attired figure arrests us rather than the personality of the man. The portraits of his brother and of *Sir Andrew Orr* seem later, the latter certainly. They are painted with a fuller brush, but both lack distinction either of treatment or execution. Indeed, much of Grant's work is open to this objection. Now and again, in his portraits of ladies, there are exceptions, but one can hardly wonder that, of his contributions to the Paris International, M. Gautier says that they were "plus apprécié des gens du monde que des artistes."

Of those here considered as successors of Raeburn Grant least reflects his characteristics. This is not to be wondered at. Raeburn was already six years dead before "young Frank" took up the profession, and his early

removal to London deprived him of what he might have assimilated from the companionship and practice of those more directly affected by the founder of the school. The influence of a fine tradition on men less capable than Grant has already been noted. Had the latter been able to add to his other qualities, the broad and restful management of light which gives distinction to *Roderick Gray* and *Dr. Wardlaw*, "les artistes" as well as "les gens du monde," might have been able to assign him a higher place amongst British portrait-painters.

Macnee, on the other hand, was all through life intimately associated with the land of his birth. During his early years we find him devoting what time he had to spare from more prosaic work to portraits of his companions and fellow students. The pencil drawing of *Robert Pollock* and the chalk and oil heads of *Macculloch* —the latter a mere rub in—represent this period. The first-named must be anterior to the autumn of 1827, for the young author of *The Course of Time* died of consumption on September 15 of that year. The chalk of *Macculloch* has little to distinguish it from similar essays by other young artists, but in the oil sketch—slight as it is –we already find a facility of hand and a Lawrence-like elegance of setting which bode well for the future. These belong to about 1828. The half-length of the young landscapist at Kelvingrove Museum may be slightly later. Here Macculloch is represented sketching. With wide-open eyes and slightly parted lips he looks eagerly at his subject over a panel held upright with the left hand. To the case of the sketch there are here added a precision of touch and a vivid characterisation which suit well the animation of the painter at work.

Like others of the group, Macnee varies his practice with subject-pictures. Sometimes they are single figures in which the painter indulges in artistic effects like *The Bracelet*, and *The Lady in Grey*; or we have the *Peasant Girl*, *The Gipsy Girl with a Bird's Nest*, *Going to Market*, and such like, which permit of a picturesque costume with rustic setting. But essentially he is a painter of portraits. That of his brother academician, *J. F. Williams*,* of date 1836, differs greatly in style from the Macculloch portraits of some eight years previous. Though wanting in some of the graces of the earlier work it is much more powerfully modelled, and shows the artist acquiring a more individual manner. If it tends to monotone, no such allegation can be made concerning the beautiful bust portrait of *Miss Macculloch*.† Here the fresh complexion of the lady who looks us full in the face is rendered with a brilliancy which leaves nothing to be desired. The paint is soft and pulpy in the lights, and the warm shadows of a pronounced light and shade harmonise finely with the yellow hair and umber of the background. The dress, of white silk or satin, is cut low, with a dark opera cloak drawn about the shoulders. This arrangement of fair flesh tones, golden hair, and sheeny fabrics against a ground of deep olive is happy in the extreme, and the work is executed with remarkable gusto and a juicier touch than usual. The middle of the century sees the painter fully matured, and in 1852 and 1853 respectively we have the full-length of *Dr. Wardlaw*‡ and the half-length of *Charles Mackay as Nicol Jarvie*.

* In the possession of the Royal Scottish Academy.

† In the possession of Lady Macnee.

‡ The property of the managers of Elgin Place Church, Glasgow.

Taken all over the former must be pronounced Macnee's masterpiece. It will always hold a foremost place amongst Scottish portraits, and a high position in European portraiture of its century. Like Watson Gordon's *Provost of Peterhead*, and Graham Gilbert's portraits of his brother artists, it combines happily the characteristic excellences of the painter, both as craftsman and as interpreter of the personality of his subject. For we have here the living presentment of one of those finer types, not too numerous amongst Scottish churchmen, large minded, placid, cultured, who have acted as a leaven on the fiery and often narrow zeal of their brethren. The venerable doctor is seated in easy posture, one elbow rests on an open Bible by his side, and with the right hand he fingers loosely a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles. The rugged cast of features is softened by the refining influences of learning and a life devoted to his mission. The forehead, bald above, is expansive, the hair silver grey, and the eyes, which look kindly on us from under bushy brows, are deep set. The means employed are of the simplest. The dark breadth of the clerical garb is treated in a manner which recalls Raeburn and Watson Gordon. Fine in surface and grateful in tone this central dark passes into a background airy and spacious, to which the dull reds of table-cover and carpet and the old gold of a heavy curtain impart a subdued sumptuousness. All this seems to enhance, it is hard to say how, the quiet dignity of the seated divine. The sobriety of the arrangement is quickened by the white of front and neckcloth, which also serves to give tone to a rather bloodless complexion.

Mackay, the actor, as Nicol Jarvie, might be set down, were it not for the evidence of the catalogue, as anterior

to *Dr. Wardlaw*. The early eighteenth-century costume is, no doubt, responsible for this, and it is difficult to shake off the impression. It is the actor in the dress rather than in the character of *Nicol Jarvie*. Mackay was at this time approaching three score and ten, and could hardly personate the famous Bailie—off the stage, at least—as he had done a generation earlier. This is all too evident, for neither brown wig nor close-shaven under-features can conceal the fact that the person here represented would be quite incapable of the Bailie's warlike feats or of surviving the misadventure that befell on the wooded shore of Loch Ard. When facing the canvas one thinks rather of the *Deacon* so often referred to in the conversation of the valiant Glaswegian. But these are defects for which Macnee can scarcely be held responsible. It is no less the work of a master than that of the previous year. The actor, in maroon-coloured coat and vest, with laced cravat, faces us at a slight angle with right hand thrust into the breast of his waistcoat. The ruddy tones and the dark background give value to the face, almost in full light, which combines with the white scarf to complete a scheme exceedingly simple in its elements. A few accents, dark and light, are supplied by the markings of the dress, the shadow of the cravat, and the glint of brass buttons, and again in the dark grey eyes, the well-marked brows, and the shadow under the nose. Yet by the subtle combination and blending of these few tones and markings, there is preserved for us a personality far different from, but no less interesting than, that of Dr. Wardlaw. In these homely yet sensitive features, touched with the pathos of advancing years, the artist has conveyed to us a something not only of the

pawky humour that so delighted our grandfathers, but of the tenderness—the sadness even—which not unfrequently accompanies the faculty of providing amusement for the multitude.

Twelve or fifteen years later the *Lady in Grey* shows that Macnee has lost none of his talent. This picture belongs to the class of which *Nelly O'Brien*, or perhaps the *Chapeau de Paille* is the prototype—only here there is no *chapeau*. But the breadth of shadow, the cool reflections, and the more direct sunlight which touches the cheek and dapples face and figure, are sufficent to associate it, in a general way, with the masterpieces of Reynolds and Rubens. The Scottish portrait has neither the picturesque costume nor the rich colour-scheme of the earlier works, and that its author has invested the smooth-braided hair and the expansive skirts of the crinoline period with much of the interest that attaches to its precursors, is due to the glamour of an effect which rarely fails in the hands of a competent craftsman. Here it certainly lends an additional charm to the girl whose sober attire is varied only by the narrow white collar and black bow at the throat, and who raises her eyes for a moment from the seam on her lap to look us full in the face. A leafy screen through which the sunlight filters on walk and lawn furnishes an appropriate background.

For another decade Sir Daniel—he received the honour of knighthood shortly after being elected President of the Royal Scottish Academy in 1876—kept his powers in full vigour and sustained his reputation by the production of many fine works. The portrait of *Robert Dalgleish, M.P.*, at the Kelvingrove Museum, painted in 1874, shows little falling away from the works of his prime. Sir Daniel

THE LADY IN GREY

By Sir Daniel Macnee, *P.*R.S.A.

THE PROPERTY OF LADY MACNEE

died in 1882, the last survivor of those here called successors of Raeburn.

None of them take equal rank with the founder of the school, but three of the group may be said, by the addition of individual qualities, to have widened the scope of native portraiture. If a selection of the more notable works of Watson Gordon, Graham Gilbert, and Macnee were aligned with an equal number of representative Raeburns, though the former would suffer by contact with Sir Henry's masterly technique—the brilliant *ensemble* that takes one by storm—there would nevertheless be found an advance in that intimacy of observation and characterisation which is a dominant note in the best portrait work of recent times. For Raeburn carried to the verge of a defect the simplification that sacrifices detail to breadth, and it is difficult to get rid of the impression, in presence even of his masterpieces, that this is a convention applied to a face rather than the countenance, as our modern eyes would have seen it. The convention is a noble one, it is true, and one which rarely fails to embody the leading characteristics of his sitter; but one misses those more tender and personal traits which also go to the making of a personality, and constitute much of its attractiveness. In these directions the interpretation is carried a stage further, is more sympathetic, as one might say, in such portraits as the *Provost of Peterhead* and *Charles Mackay* than with the earlier painter. There is something gained in technique also, for this more sympathetic insight demands its analogue in touch and handling. For no more in portraiture than in the *genre* of Wilkie can these finer shades of expression be attained unless through a perfect unison and correspondence between the organ which perceives and that

which executes. There is nothing more delightful in the work of Watson Gordon than the way his brush conforms itself to this keener perception of more intimate detail and the incidences of light which express it. And both the *John Gibson* and the *Charles Mackay* of the other two painters, if compared with the brilliant work of Raeburn in the same rooms, reveal a something of closer analysis—of verisimilitude—expressed through a handling more complex, though still free and artistic. To those who know French portraiture and the leathery epidermis with which Scheffer and Ingres and Delaroche credited their sitters, when they condescended to that branch of art, it is not surprising that at the Paris International the Scotsmen held a prominent place or that Gautier wrote of them as he did.

CHAPTER VIII

WILKIE'S CONTEMPORARIES

Wilkie, like Raeburn, had a following, strongly influenced by his methods, and fired by his success; but, though head and shoulders above the rest, he did not stand so absolutely alone as did the portrait-painter. The movement associated with Wilkie had been silently at work since David Allan gave the initiative. Consequently we find in the catalogues of the Associated Artists that various young painters were exhibiting subjects more or less of the *genre* type, or suggested by the poems of Burns, Falconer, Beattie, Hector Macneil, and others, then favourites with the Scottish public. These painters and their works are mostly forgotten, but a certain tradition lingers about the humorous pieces of Alexander Carse. In Lord Young's collection are two good examples. One shows three topers seated about a punch-bowl drinking a toast, in which a woman standing beyond joins; in the other, a youth in Scotch bonnet and plaid, with bundle and stick in hand, takes leave of his sweetheart. Both are dark in tone and heavy in touch, but there is a hint of more lightsome handling in the faces of lad and girl in the last-named canvas.

Two names of distinction appear amongst the contemporaries of Wilkie—both slightly older than he was—

William Allan and Andrew Geddes. The former attained to the greater honours, and in his lifetime was generally regarded as the greater painter, but to-day the order must be reversed. Both were men of strong character, and the work of either has an individuality which gives it a place apart in the story of Scottish art. Though associated with Wilkie in many ways, they cannot be called followers in the sense which applies to Alexander Fraser, John Burnet, and W. H. Lizars. In technique, it is true, Allan shows to a considerable extent the influence of his younger fellow student, but technique was never a strong point in his work. Geddes, after his early venture into the field of *genre* painting, remains unaffected by the methods of his more famous friend and compatriot.

The life of William Allan had in it an element of the adventurous and romantic, which was partly accountable for the position he held in the estimation of his contemporaries. Three years Wilkie's senior, and his fellow student under John Graham, with the old instinct of the Scot he early set out to find his fortune in a larger field. Not meeting with the expected success in London, he resolved to try "foreign parts," and—strange choice for the year of grace 1805—selected St. Petersburg as his goal. Driven into Memel by stress of weather, the young artist soon found himself almost penniless on Prussian soil. Nothing daunted, after having replenished his exchequer by painting a few portraits at the Baltic seaport, he continued his journey overland, passing on his way portions of the Russian army on their march to Austerlitz. Arrived at his destination, the good fairy appeared in the person of his countryman, Sir Alexander Crichton, then physician to the Imperial family. After executing a few portrait

commissions, obtained through Sir Alexander's influence, Allan, who had other ambitions, spent some years in exploring the then almost unknown tracts of south-eastern Russia. He even passed beyond its borders, and collected rich store of sketches and properties from the outlying provinces of Turkey and the semi-fabulous regions of Circassia and the Caucasus. In these days when a Cook's tourist can do all this without soiling his shoes, and when both French and British artists have exploited countries even more remote, the travels of the future President may seem a small matter, but in the opening years of the nineteenth century it was otherwise. The Russia of those days was as difficult to get away from as to enter, and when—about 1812—he was desirous of returning to his native country, Allan found that the complications arising out of the French invasion rendered the journey impossible. It was not till two years later that he reached Edinburgh, where it is little wonder that his sketches and narratives of strange adventure amongst Ukraine Cossacks and Circassian chiefs caused something of a sensation.

Settling down in his native city, Allan for a considerable succession of years divided his talent between painting from his foreign experiences and the illustration of Scottish history. But he was smitten with the roving disposition, and when, about 1828, an affection of the eyes rendered some cessation of work and change necessary, he set off for Italy, whence, after wintering in Rome, he extended his travels to Constantinople, Greece, and Asia Minor. The fruits of this journey were manifest in such pictures as *The Slave Market*, *Constantinople*, and *Lord Byron in the Fisherman's Hut after Swimming the*

Hellespont. Twice again he sought fresh material for his art; first in 1834, when he visited Spain and Northern Africa; and in 1844, when, as Sir William and President of the Royal Scottish Academy, he revisited Russia and painted for the Emperor, whose acquaintance he had made years before as the Grand Duke Nicholas, the picture of *Peter the Great teaching his Subjects the Art of Shipbuilding.*

Such in brief outline was the career of Sir William Allan; and the variety of his experiences, the popular nature of his subjects, no less than his delightful personality, made him a favourite amongst the prominent men of his day. Scott, Wilson, and Lockhart allude to his work in the most flattering terms, terms they never thought of bestowing on Raeburn. Sir Walter, indeed, answering a request from the Duke of Buccleuch, in 1819, that he would sit to the latter for a portrait to be placed in his library at Bowhill, says, "Why not try Allan, a man of real genius." Fortunately the Duke held to his choice, but the phrase quoted is interesting as showing the estimation in which the history painter was held in those days.

Allan makes his first appearance in Scottish exhibitions in 1814 with a *Portrait of himself in the Costume of a Circassian, painted at Toulizen, 1813*, and *Don Cossacks conducting French Prisoners to a Russian Camp, with a Russian Village on fire in the distance.*

During the immediately succeeding years he was a frequent exhibitor at the Royal Academy, the catalogues of 1818 and 1821 showing respectively two important subjects, *The Press Gang* and *The Murder of Archbishop Sharp.* In 1821 he also sent to the Institution's first exhibition of works of living artists *A Polish Chief* and

*Tartar Banditti dividing Spoil.** A member of the reconstructed Scottish Academy in 1830, he was elected President on the death of George Watson in 1837, and shortly afterwards—the Academy having now obtained a Royal Charter—he received the honour of knighthood. During his twenty years connection with the body he was an almost constant contributor to its annual exhibitions. Sometimes he is represented by a single picture, often by two or three, seldom by more, for the large historical compositions in which he delighted required time for their working out.

From the painter's point of view Allan's work is disappointing. Alike in his Eastern subjects—whether simple or more elaborate—his portraits, and his historic series, there is little to delight the eye or quicken the pulse of the craftsman. Of the former class, such works as *Circassian Chiefs selling Captives*† and *The Slave Market, Constantinople*,‡ display a fine grouping and a disposition of light and shade which assist well the narrative interest of the subject. The last-named may be taken as representative. A large and important composition, the work of his prime, the canvas sums up Sir William's merits and defects, and enables us to understand the high place he held in the estimation of his contemporaries. Even now, when distance has been almost annihilated, and the life of the near and far East has become familiar to us, it is impossible to look on this picture without admiration of the skill with which its picturesque and dramatic elements have been combined

* In the Albert Institute, Dundee.

† In the collection of the Earl of Wemyss, at Gosford.

‡ In the possession of James Brechin, Esq., Edinburgh.

and utilised. Glancing the eye across its multitudinous grouping one cannot but feel that the artist possessed, in a high degree, the faculty of so arranging and distributing his masses of colour and scheme of light and shade as at once to satisfy the æsthetic sense and to elucidate the narrative. That handsome Pasha who reins in his restive white Arab as he bargains with the negro merchant for his enticing ware, these impassive Turks seated in the foreground, the mounted Circassian chief in shirt of mail, the huddled groups of Greek and Georgian slaves, whose fair complexions contrast with their dark-skinned Ethiopian attendants; all this well disposed against a restful background of mosque and minaret and the deep blue of an Eastern sky, presented a rare opportunity for the painter. Unfortunately Allan's brush was not quite equal to the occasion. Though his work is interesting its merit consists rather in the picturesque setting of subject or incident than in the painter-like qualities in which so many of his compatriots have excelled. To a Phillip or a Pettie those costly fabrics of silk and gauze and velvet, or the long-barrelled guns and formidable-looking pistols in *Dividing the Spoil*, would have furnished occasion for colour and handling. With Allan the picturesqueness of attire and accessories barely saves the pictures from dulness. Sometimes, indeed, his overcrowding of accessories and heavy-handed treatment of detail injure the effect of a really fine design, as in the *Circassian Chiefs selling Captives*. Of the large historical pieces it is difficult to speak. Our public collections are without examples, if we except the unfinished *Bannockburn* which now forms part of the circulating collection of the Scottish National Gallery.

THE SLAVE MARKET, CONSTANTINOPLE

By Sir William Allan, *P.R.S.A.*, R.A.

The Property of James Leitch, Esq.

Andrew Geddes, on the contrary, was a born painter. He is difficult to place, in more ways than one. His professional life was devoted almost entirely to portrait-painting, yet he cannot be classed amongst the successors of Raeburn treated of in the preceding chapter. Nor can his work be said to have any true affinity with that of Wilkie. Apart from his solitary essay in character painting—*The Draught Players*, of 1809—which in treatment shows strongly the influence of the great *genre* painter, Geddes's art is individual. He is a contemporary, not a follower, of his better-known countryman.

Again, all through his career he seems to have had a foot on either side the border. As a rule, Scottish painters, during the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century, either remained in the North, or, after a few preliminary years, settled in London. Geddes, till he was well on for forty, hovered between the two, sometimes keeping a studio in both capitals, and even after his settlement in the larger he worked at times in Edinburgh. He was an honorary member of the Royal Institution, and, probably, for that reason, he was never connected with the Scottish Academy. His recognition by the Royal Academy was long delayed, but from 1833 onwards he exhibited as an associate of that body.

At the date of the painter's birth, his father, David Geddes, held the appointment of deputy auditor in the Excise Office, Edinburgh. The emoluments, though not high, enabled him to form a large collection of pictures, etchings, and engravings, which, after his death, were sold, in 1804, partly in Edinburgh and partly in London. The sale of the prints and engravings lasted fifteen days. The pictures, sixty-nine in number, were disposed of at

Martin's auction rooms, where the Edinburgh portion of the prints was also sold. Such a home must have been an ideal one for the future painter, who, we are told, used to invest his boyish savings in such prints as took his fancy and were within his slender means. His father, however, was opposed to his following art as a profession, and after passing through Dr. Adam's class at the High School, and a year or two at the University, he spent five years in the Excise Office. Though he continued to indulge his taste by copying old master drawings lent him by friends, he lost the years when the elements of the craft are most easily assimilated ; and it was only after his father's death that he was free to follow his own bent.

His real art education commenced when he took his place beside Wilkie, Jackson, and Haydon in the Royal Academy school at the age of twenty-three. That same year—1806—he exhibited at Somerset House *St. John in the Wilderness*, and two years later, *A Girl ; Candle-light*. At the exhibitions of the Associated Artists in Edinburgh, he is represented from 1809 to 1812 by portraits and a landscape, *A Storm Coming on*, his solitary contribution for 1810. *The Draught Players*,* signed 1809, appeared at the Royal Academy the following year. Though evidently inspired by Wilkie's renderings of like subjects, it displays very considerable ability, both in the observation of character and in execution ; whilst its stronger pronunciation of local colour suggests that Geddes may have been one of the influences which led to the fuller recognition of that element in Wilkie's *Village Festival*.

He did not again essay the *genre* department, and for

* In the possession of A. N. G. Aitken, Esq., Edinburgh.

many years thereafter he was kept busy with portrait commissions. He had now returned to Edinburgh, though he regularly visited London during the season. From a list of his works for the years 1812–13, we can gather that already a large proportion of these were the small full-lengths and half-lengths in which he was so successful. Two notable examples of the former were exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1816, those of *George Sanders* the miniaturist and of *Wilkie.** In the latter, well-known from Ward's fine mezzotint, the painter's loosely-knit figure, seen in profile, is enveloped in a flowered dressing-gown, something between fawn and drab in colour, He leans both elbows on the back of a tapestry-covered chair, and his cheek on the right hand. The face is shown nearly full front. A dark folding screen and the shadowed recesses of the room give sufficient breadth and salience, and the rather monotonic arrangement is relieved by the white and blue of stocking and slipper, the red border of an Indian shawl, and the more subdued colours of the tapestried chair and carpet. The head is deftly painted with a full brush, and a surface neither too smooth nor over-impastoed; while the quick gleam of the eye and the looser treatment of the hair add character to features seen under a pretty decided effect of light and shade. There is not all the suavity one could have desired in the lines of the mouth and of the hand on which the cheek is rested; here, indeed, as frequently, some of the accessories are touched with greater dexterity than the more important parts, as witness the delicately flowered pattern of the dressing-gown and the broidered fringe of the shawl. As a likeness of Wilkie, it has always been considered

* In the possession of the Earl of Camperdown.

both striking and characteristic. Though without the commanding interest of the other, the *George Sanders*, now in the Scottish National Gallery, is a work of much merit, and marks a distinct advance, technically at least, on the similar portraits of his mother and *Archibald Constable*, painted in 1812. Judged from the mezzotint so much prized by collectors, the portrait in which *Patrick Brydone*, the Sicilian traveller, is represented reclining full-length on a sofa, is one of Geddes's happiest and most original. Another, engraved in the *Art Journal* for 1853, under the title *Dull Readings*, which appears amongst the etchings as *Mr. and Mrs. Terry*, combines finely the artist's qualities in this work of smaller scale. The dark background of this picture, which measures only 10 × 13 inches, has unfortunately gone, but nothing could be more delightful than the mellow glow and the luscious, yet dainty, touch with which the charming features of Mrs. Terry are rendered, or the opposition of her white-robed figure to the shadowed form of her drowsy husband. Terry was the dramatiser of many of Scott's novels, and his wife, a daughter of Alexander Nasmyth.

Geddes's life-size portraiture has also its individual note. The bust portrait of his mother* seems, from its resemblance to it, to belong to the same date as the small full-length already mentioned, viz., 1812. Mrs. Geddes is in widow's weeds. The projecting bonnet and veil throw the face into luminous half-tone, and her right hand, dimly seen, draws closer the folds of a cloak of deep olive grey. The chiaroscuro is Rembrandtish, and the handling also recalls some of the Dutchman's work, for the impasto of

* In the National Gallery of Scotland.

the flesh is heavy, and the brushing has little relation to the modelling, a failing as rare in the old masters as with contemporary Scottish painters. The soft pulpy surface of the skin is, nevertheless, effectively rendered, and the features indicated without loss of the breadth specially required in such treatment. A three-quarter length of his sister Anne* belongs to about the same date, and contemporaneous portraits by the same hand could hardly be more unlike. Here the artist has thought only of his sitter, a handsome girl of rather slight build and grave demeanour. Miss Geddes is seen in profile. The red gown, of almost classic severity, leaves throat and arms bare, and the fine features are silhouetted against the background, at that angle just removed from the pure profile, which gives a hint of farther cheek and eye. She is of the dark-haired, white-skinned type, and the eyes of blue grey are over-arched with finely pencilled brows. The face is in full light, the only marked shadows being those which indicate the contour of neck and jaw. In technique it differs entirely from the portrait of his mother; for the flesh is painted in a closely wrought material of fine and equal surface, save in the bare arm where the artist has permitted himself a looser handling and a heavier impasto. Also the features are here indicated with a touch which conforms well to the modelling, and is keener in its accentuation than in some of his later work on this scale. The fine complexion is enhanced by the decisive markings of the side locks on brow and temple, and by the dark setting of tree boles and foliage.

It is unnecessary to follow further Geddes's work in portraiture. Neither can one linger over his Scriptural

* In the possession of A. Geddes Scott, Esq.

compositions—*Christ and the Woman of Samaria*, and *The Ascension*. The latter only is known to the writer. It forms the altar-piece of the church of St. James, Garlick Hill, and was painted when a brother of his friend Burnet was incumbent there. It is a large upright with life-size figures, and the grouping essential to the subject. Originally a work of much ability, the lower part has been damaged and darkened by fire, and this renders it difficult to form an idea of its merits as a composition. Its colour-scheme associates it with the Venetians, but there is considerable originality in the dramatic presentment of the scene. The artist's sole venture into the domain of contemporary history—*The Discovery of the Scottish Regalia*—was, owing no doubt to its great size, left on his hands, and, having been seriously damaged, it was, after Mr. Geddes's death, divided into parts, some of which—portraits of various personages represented—were sold to them by his widow. A head of Sir Walter Scott, either cut from this picture, or a study for the same, is now in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery.

The work by which Geddes is most widely and favourably known, and which better than any other displays his qualities, belongs to that sphere in which so many portrait-painters have indulged when commissions were slack, the single figure symbolising some whim of the fancy or flight of the imagination. It is a vein peculiarly liable to failure. In nine cases out of ten the idea is inadequately set forth or, what is worse, overstrained; but surely in this *Summer** all that one associates with the season is summed up in the graceful form and features of Nasmyth's daughter, and the environment in which the artist has portrayed her. A

* In the National Gallery of Scotland.

SUMMER

By Andrew Geddes, A.R.A.

IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF SCOTLAND

great straw hat shadowing face and throat, a cherry-coloured scarf tied loosely about the neck, a dark bodice under an open jacket of sheeny white set against a blue sky and glimpse of summer landscape—the elements are simple—and the whole charm of the picture lies in the felicity with which the artist has suited his colour-scheme to the idea he has sought to illustrate. The broad flap of yellow straw, the loose silken fabrics of sleeves and headgear, the azure and cherry of sky and kerchief, associate themselves readily with his *motif*; whilst, on the æsthetic side, they are here arranged in a delicious harmony to which value is given by the full black of the bodice. The warm carnations of the shadowed face, the cool reflections from below, eyes and mouth on the verge of laughter, and the wisp of light brown hair about the ears, all bring their quota to the sum total which makes this half-length figure of Miss Nasmyth a very personification of summer. The technique is not faultless, here and there the drawing is loose, and the touch has some of the bluntness and lack of adaptation to the form already noted. But these are slight defects in one of the most entirely satisfying pictures of its class.

Like Wilkie, and fired perhaps by his friend's example, Geddes experimented in etching. In 1826 he issued a series of ten plates. Of these, that of his mother in hood and cloak, from the picture already described, the *Child with Apple*, and the cavalier-like head of *Henry Broadwood* are the most successful. The second of those named, a dry-point, has induced Hamerton to include Geddes amongst distinguished etchers, and he also speaks highly of the first and of one of the landscape plates. His manner differs from that of Wilkie much as his painting does. There is

less of the clean, lithe line, and a softer, more lithographic-like effect is obtained. That of the child is of great charm. An infant, of perhaps two years, seated on the turf of some woodland glade, reaches forward one bare arm with the apple, resting the other near a reserve supply of fruit by its side. There is here a Reynolds-like grace and sense of innocence which are quite fascinating. The wide-open dark eyes, a chain of beads about the neck, and the apple in the hand are the only points emphasised, and by contrast they enhance the flowing lines and delicate shadows of the face and white frock, from under the folds of which one naked foot emerges. A shady background of broken bank, tree stem, and leafage, gives a fine setting for the head and shoulders. The handsome features of Henry Broadwood are seen at the three-quarter angle. The type is more of the seventeenth than of the nineteenth century; the touch of hauteur in the side glance, as well as the indication of Vandyck collar, associates it with some of the portraits the Flemish painter has left us of the Royalist aristocracy of his time. Nothing could be more dainty than the softness and perfect precision of the lines with which the wavy hair and delicate contours are expressed. There is little shadow; what there is is mostly in the hair, but the few darker markings of eyes and nostril, and those under the ear and chin, are added with consummate skill.

Geddes is one of those not infrequent in the annals of Art and Literature whose reputations seem never to have equalled their abilities. His work was known and appreciated by his brother artists, Wilkie and Lawrence amongst the number, but official recognition came late and never fully, whilst many men of inferior parts passed quickly to

the highest honours of the Academy. It cannot be said that he was neglected by the public, for his commissions were numerous and his circumstances seem to have been easy all through life. Perhaps, as in other similar cases, there was with Geddes a lack of that concentration which is one of the main elements of success. Even in portraiture he halts between the small full-lengths we associate with him, and the life size in which all the masters have won their laurels. The former ally him also with a department of *genre* in which he might have shone, and after which he seems always to have hankered. His early venture in *The Draught Players* was of a different nature. For this popular side of *genre* he had neither the powers of observation nor the skill in the designing and grouping of numerous figures which are the *sine qua non* of success. But in his little picture, *Dull Readings*, and in various of his small portraits, are we not in the very atmosphere of De Hooch and Terburg? of those cosy, homely interiors which preserve for us after two centuries and a half so invaluable a record of middle-class Dutch life. Geddes has all the skill of craft and the delicate discrimination of the surfaces of fabrics and still life which play such an important *rôle* in pictures of the kind. Again, his wide culture and foreign travel awakened ambitions which led him to devote much time to making copies of the old masters, and there is little doubt that to the same source may be traced his excursions into the domain of sacred art. These congenial pursuits, though they lend charm to the artist's life, promote neither reputation nor commercial success. For the latter it is necessary to concentrate one's energies—sometimes even to keep thrumming the same string for half a lifetime.

He had high ideals, which perhaps the want of early training hindered his quite arriving at, but what he accomplished is sufficient to give him an honourable place amongst Scottish, or even amongst British painters. Wilkie was right when, after seeing one of his combinations of fancy with portraiture, he said "If Mr. Geddes could once get the public applause on his side he would never lose it, his works are so far above what is called the fashion; and in this style of art, it is my decided opinion he has more taste than any artist in Britain." Alas! the public verdict is reflected in the fact that whilst a memorial tablet marks the residence of Sir William Allan, no such tribute has yet been paid to the superior art of Andrew Geddes.

In Wilkie's other contemporaries his influence is more evident. One of them, Alexander Fraser, acted as his assistant for twenty years, working in his studio, and being responsible for much of the still-life portions of his master's elaborate compositions. The paintings of Lizars and Burnet are founded on those of Wilkie alike in subject and technique. Both were engravers, and to the latter especially art is deeply indebted for his artistic renderings of some of the most popular works of his friend and fellow student, as well as for his various writings, which, it is hardly too much to say, have become classics in their special department. The titles of his exhibited pictures sufficiently attest their origin—*The Draught Players*, *The Humorous Ballad*, *Greenwich Hospital and Naval Heroes*, and such like. The last-named, his most important work, was painted for the Duke of Wellington as a companion to *Chelsea Pensioners*. As in the better-known picture, the naval heroes read the news and discuss

the events of the war in the open, and though, no special victory being associated with the event, the canvas wants the dramatic intensity of its rival, there is a certain similarity of arrangement. The treatment is more conventional and the grouping in parts confused and unrestful. . Some of the heads are finely characterised, but the browner tone and more uncouth technique betray the tyro in the painter's craft. In spite of these defects it is a work of much ability and forms a not unworthy pendant to Wilkie's picture.

Of the work of his younger brother James not much is known north of the Tweed. When little over twenty he followed the engraver to London, where, captivated by the works of Cuyp and Paul Potter, he devoted himself to the landscape and animal department. Of a delicate constitution, he early fell into a consumption, of which he died at the age of twenty-eight. Judged by a small canvas—*Cattle in a Landscape* at South Kensington—the young Scotsman was far from having attained the technical skill of the masters he so admired.

Lizars is well represented in the Scottish National Gallery by his *Reading the Will* and *A Scotch Wedding*; inspired, one would have said, by Wilkie's better-known pictures of the same subject, but for the fact that they were painted some years earlier. Both show great dramatic ability and a keen observation of character rendered with a touch which, in spite of a thin and precise application of the pigment, admirably suits the purpose. It is said that owing to his father's death about this time, leaving a widow and family dependent on the son's exertions, Lizars sacrificed his higher ambitions to his sense of duty and

returned to the paternal profession of engraving. Whether he would have reached a much higher standard is at best open to question. For in these crowded panels there is a certain want of taste, a forcing of the note. The restrained and sympathetic execution and the quiet spaces which give restfulness to Wilkie's most stirring compositions are wanting. The colour, too, is unpleasantly cold and slaty in the one, and as unpleasantly hot in the other. But in both, some of the heads are painted with admirable daintiness of touch—those of the comely young widow in *Reading the Will* and of the red-cloaked woman in *A Scotch Wedding* may be instanced. Lord Young's collection contains a clever sketch of the first-named picture.

Fraser also is somewhat wanting in taste; his figures frequently verge on the vulgar, but he can rise to better things. *Tam o' Shanter and the Smith*, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1846, is a good example. The types chosen are not without a strain of coarseness, but both are painted with a gusto which suits the occasion; and a foil to the boisterous hilarity of the "drouthy cronies" is provided in the patient "naig" which turns its head to regard wistfully the folly of its master. The skill with which its partly shadowed form is evolved from the umbers of the background is a fine example of a method specially associated with Wilkie and his followers. A little picture in the possession of Lady Macnee also shows the artist to great advantage. A red cock perched on an upturned tub is crowing lustily over the prostrate form of a white rival. The incident, though trivial, has its spice of humour, and it is handled throughout with a vivacity which recalls the work of some of the Dutch painters of poultry and still life.

READING THE WILL

The colour in the dishevelled plumage of the vanquished bird is especially fine. This is evidently a study for the foreground incident of his picture, *The Moment of Victory*.

Two names of slightly later date may be added to the list, those of Walter Geikie and William Kidd. The former, who was deaf and dumb, is best known through his etchings, mostly humorous incidents of low life, culled from Edinburgh and the surrounding districts. His painting is of little significance. A *Cottage Scene with Figures* is at the Mound, where also may be seen two drawings in Indian ink for his *Etchings Illustrative of Scottish Life and Scenery*.

Kidd was a man of a different stamp. He is represented at the first exhibition of the Associated Artists—that of 1809. The subject, *A Cobbler's Shop*, is entered in the catalogue as "by W. Kidd, aged 13 years, apprentice to J. Howe." About 1821 he removed to London, after which he was a frequent exhibitor at the Royal Academy, chiefly of subjects associated with sport. He seems never to have had much success, though his works reveal a talent which ought to have given him a high rank amongst painters. A small panel in the Kelvingrove Museum, *An Art Connoisseur*, may be cited in proof of this. A monkey, mounted on a red-cushioned chair, peers through a binocular at a painting of a nude female which is enclosed in a cabinet. The apartment is profusely hung with pictures; and two domestics, one a negro, stand grinning in the doorway. The humour of the scene is enhanced by the delightful spontaneity with which the artist has rendered the various fabrics and furnishings of the collector's sanctum. A picture of a

humorous street incident,* in which a butcher's boy is laid hold of by an irate bailiff, though, like most of Kidd's work, verging on vulgarity, shows much excellent painting in the central group. The composition suffers from the overcrowding of the subsidiary parts.

* In the possession of Miss Lewis, Edinburgh.

CHAPTER IX

SOCIAL AND ARTISTIC LIFE IN EDINBURGH 1773–1823

A GLANCE at the conditions which, within forty years of Raeburn's opening his studio in George Street, rendered possible the establishment of such bodies as the Institution and the Scottish Academy, may not be uninteresting. Incidentally it will have the advantage of throwing light on the social and personal characteristics of some of the painters whose works have been discussed, or will demand consideration in succeeding chapters. During the last quarter of the eighteenth century there is little to elucidate art life in Edinburgh. Alexander Runciman had died a comparatively young man in 1785. His contemporaries Willison and Martin survived him by a dozen and thirteen years respectively, long enough to witness the triumph of Raeburn—perhaps to wonder at it—we know of the latter's contemptuous allusion to "the lad in George Street"; and David Allan, who, we may be sure, would hail the rise of a genuine native art, left the stage in 1796. With the deaths of Jacob More and Gavin Hamilton at Rome during the same decade, the old order may be said to have passed from Scottish painting; for though so long resident abroad, their occasional visits

and the rumour of the state they held beyond the Alps kept them in touch with their native country.

Meanwhile a new art was rising from the ashes of the old. Its representatives were as yet few. Raeburn and George Watson in portraiture, Nasmyth in landscape, and one or two, like Carse and Weir, in *genre*, well nigh exhaust the list; but material conditions were improving, and, at the change of the centuries, John Graham had under him a band of eager students, several of whom were to add lustre to Scottish painting. Even in the earlier days of this revival, 1785–90, the city was by no means so behindhand in the arts as might have been expected from its long stagnation and outlying position. Communication with the south was still slow and difficult, but for that very reason Edinburgh remained the town residence of the greater part of the nobility and gentry of Scotland, and as rent-rolls improved the arts benefited. There is an interesting glimpse of the situation in regard to music in the opening chapter of the memoir of the marine painter, Schetky.* It is there told how the father of the future artist, having been engaged to play the 'cello at the St. Cecilia concerts, accompanied by his brother, rode into Edinburgh on a raw February afternoon of 1773. After refreshing themselves at Peter Ramsay's Inn at St. Mary's Wynd, and having ascertained that a concert was to take place that evening "'Why, Karl, we are in luck' said Christoff; 'Let us go and hear what they call music in Scotland.'" Gaining admittance, not without difficulty, for the audience was select, they had not long listened to the performance when "Karl," said the elder, "this is very fine, we do not do better than this in Darmstadt."

* By his daughter, Edinburgh, 1877.

There were doubtless many amateurs—in the true sense—of painting as well as of music in the audience, "crowded with the flower of the aristocracy," before which Christoff Schetky performed that evening, for the new 'cellist had to throw off his incognito and make his bow to his patrons before he left the hall. So that even in those days the few professionals, apart from portrait-painters, would not be altogether without appreciation and employment. The families at Penicuik and Newhall had long been liberal patrons of the arts, and we know that about the close of the century there were in Edinburgh several ardent collectors, both of paintings and engravings.

When Schetky made his *début* at the St. Cecilia Hall the great bulk even of the professional classes were still resident in the old town. He himself settled and brought up his family in Ainslie's Close. But things were changing rapidly, and Princes Street was creeping westward on the slopes beyond the Nor' Loch. By 1787 Raeburn has a studio in George Street, and year by year his walk to his labours on week-days and to the West Kirk on Sundays would be less through green lanes and more through the extending streets of the city. Towards 1810* when he used to have for company young John Watson from Ann Street, the new town was approaching the Water of Leith, and the owner of St. Bernard's and The Dean was, no doubt, his projecting feuing schemes on the haughs beyond. His passion for building had thenceforth free scope, and many a talk he would have with his friend Nasmyth, who had been consulted by the city authorities in the laying out of the New Town. There is no lack of sidelights on

* "Historic Memorials of Stockbridge." C. Hill, Edinburgh, 1887, page 101.

the social life of Edinburgh during the 'prentice years of Raeburn and Nasmyth; but science and literature are more in evidence than art. There was no Scottish Reynolds to welcome Dr. Johnson in 1773, although Topham* a year or two later flatters Runciman with the title; and though both he and Bewick were much impressed with the picturesque and commanding situation of the city, beyond the above reference there is little to be gleaned from their narratives concerning the resident painters. During his day or two in the capital Bewick's only contact with the art community was a call he made on an engraver in Parliament Square, Hector Gavin by name. Ten years after Topham came Burns to electrify the city with his blazing eyes and ardent temperament. Of *his* admiration for "Scotia's darling seat" there is ample record. At many a merry meeting he would have for companions David Allan, Alexander Nasmyth, and others of the small art circle. Nasmyth, we know, was one of his chosen comrades. They climbed Arthur's Seat to see the sun rise, tramped the country together for miles around, and held high jinks with kindred spirits at Johnnie Dowie's tavern. There, or at the Cape Club, the poet and Raeburn would certainly have met, had his visit not happened during the latter's absence in Italy; for "Doway College," as the Libberton's Wynd institution was named in compliment to the host, was founded by Martin, and thither we are told† his more celebrated pupil often accompanied him in his younger days. At the "Cape" Raeburn was known as "Sir Toby," Runciman as "Sir Brimstone," and they had amongst their

* Topham's Letters from Edinburgh. London, 1776.

† Wilson's "Memorials of Edinburgh in the olden time."

club-mates Robert Fergusson, the poet, and the afterwards notorious Deacon Brodie. What a portrait we might have had had Burns and Raeburn met. As it is we are indebted to Nasmyth for the bust portrait known to every one, and the small full length suggested on the occasion of an early morning walk with the poet to Roslin.

With the opening of a new century and the continued growth of the city the art circle widened. Wilkie and Allan, John Watson and Patrick Nasmyth, are entering on their careers. Andrew Geddes dutifully bows to the parental decree, takes his course at the university, and enters his father's office, but his heart is otherwhere. The amateur circle expands in sympathy with the professional, and soon we have the Dilettanti Society * holding its fortnightly meetings in "a commodious tavern in the High Street." The society included besides artist members such distinguished men as Scott, Gibson Lockhart, Dr. Brewster, Professor Wilson, Jeffrey, Cockburn, the Ballantynes, and James Hogg, with the eccentric David Bridges, dubbed "Director-General of the Fine Arts for Scotland," as secretary. The drinks were restricted to Edinburgh ale and whisky toddy. During the first ten years of the century several of the more notable painters went south. On the other hand, landscape received a notable accession in Thomson and Grecian Williams. The exhibitions of the Associated Artists helped the cause, and before another decade had passed, the strength of the art community in the capital, and throughout Scotland, was unmistakably shown by the founding of the Institution. The veterans, Raeburn, Nasmyth, and George

* A picture of the club in full session was painted by William Allan. James Nasmyth's Autobiography. S. Smiles. London, 1885, page 35.

Watson were living in a changed community; but even the prejudice of advancing years could hardly have preferred the earlier times. The abler artists have left the old town for more fashionable quarters. Nasmyth is settled over against Raeburn's studio in York Place; Andrew Geddes is almost next door; George Watson in Forth Street, and Williams in Duke Street. The versatile "father of Scottish landscape painting" has need of all his faculties, for there is a family of ten to look after —four sons and six daughters—but the paternal industry and talent proved hereditary in both boys and girls. The painter, Patrick, is early doing for himself, and leaves for London in 1808. The girls, several of whom were capable artists, assisted their father in the "classes," which had become quite the fashion; and, as the youngest of the family—James, of steam-hammer celebrity—tells us, would often conduct their pupils, sketch-book in hand, to the more picturesque points in the immediate vicinity, "or by the seashore from Newhaven to North Berwick Law." His autobiography contains some delightful glimpses of the social side of art life in those far-off days. "Raeburn often joined my father in his afternoon walks round Edinburgh. They took delight in the picturesque scenery by which the city is surrounded. The walks about Arthur's Seat were the most enjoyable of all. When a boy I had often the pleasure of accompanying them and of listening to their conversation. And then there were the pleasant evenings at home. When the day's work was over friends looked in to have a fireside crack—sometimes scientific men, sometimes artists, often both. They were all made welcome. There was no formality about their visits—the family went on with

their work as before. The girls were usually busy with their needles, and others with pen and pencil. My father would go on with the artistic work he had in hand, for his industry was incessant. He would model a castle or a tree, or proceed with some proposed improvement of the streets of the rapidly-extending city. They brought up the last new thing in science, in discovery, in history, or in campaigning, for the war was then raging throughout Europe. Rizzared or Finnan haddies, or a dish of oysters, with a glass of Edinburgh ale, and a rummer of toddy, concluded these friendly evenings." Writing towards the close of the century, the great machinist is constrained to question whether we are "a bit more happy than when all the vaunted triumphs of science and so-called education were in embryo."

Through those years the genial presence of Scott runs like a golden thread. Though the æsthetic was not the strong side of his nature, none were more welcome to his fireside, in town or on Tweedside, than the artist fraternity. It was not till later, when all were soliciting sittings from him, that he humorously says that the very dogs were uneasy when a painter made his appearance. Schetky tells how he and Willie Allan would step out to Ashiestiel —it was only some thirty miles—and sit listening to Scott's rehearsings in the garden, regardless of Mrs. Scott's appeals to come to supper; and how the poet was "just distracted" as he told him of his chance interview with Prince Charlie's brother, the Cardinal Duke of York, after his return from his tramp through France and Italy during the Peace of Amiens. Schetky soon leaves for his teaching appointments at the Military and Naval Colleges in the south, but the letters from various members of the family

to him still furnish information regarding the art life of his old home. In 1818 a sister writes, "Turner has been here to transact matters relative to the publication of a work comprising views of our Scottish castles. Turner took sketches of Roslin, Borthwick, and Dunbar Castles, but no one saw them except Walter Scott. We are all, however, provoked at the coldness of his manner. We intended to have had a joyous evening on his account, but finding him such a *stick*, we did not think the pleasure of showing him to our friends would be adequate to the trouble and expense. Nicolson had his promise to dine with him; and after preparing a feast, and having ten fine fellows to make merry with him, Turner never made his appearance." A brother writes on the same sheet, "That wayward ecclesiastic, Thomson, has just finished a picture, one of the most splendid I have ever set my eyes on. Allan, poor fellow, has lately lost his health and still more his spirits. Geddes is here, getting on with an enormous and very clever picture of the Commissioners finding the Regalia of Scotland in the castle here." Thomson's coming had indeed been a boon to the art society of the capital. A pleasant two miles walk from the centre of the city, the Manse of Duddingston became a rendezvous for the artistic and literary notabilities of Edinburgh. There, it is said, in the garden sloping gently to the margin of the loch, Sir Walter sketched out his "Heart of Midlothian." Within a mile of St. Leonard's and Muschat's cairn, with the dwellings of "the Laird" and Reuben Butler full in face and "St. Giles's mingling din" wafted on the breeze, the situation was certainly suited for the purpose. And with the hospitable minister Turner used to take up his abode when sketching about

the city, hurrying out to dinner, then an early function, and back again, rather than spend anything at a tavern. It has been the writer's good fortune quite recently to visit this garden haunted by memories of so much that is best in Scottish art and literature. The old ash under the shade of which so many congenial spirits met, known as Scott's tree, no longer stands. It fell, or rather subsided, on a quiet summer evening a few years ago, but its bole, lying athwart the velvety lawn, is wreathed with creeping plants and flowers lovingly tended by Thomson's successor. What meetings have been there when Wilkie or Collins from across the border would discuss art principles and "the Correggiosities of Correggio" with their northern compeers, or Allan and Williams relate their adventures in the Ukraine and the Ægean to Scott and Will Clerk—the Darsie Latimer of "Redgauntlet." A light refreshment and the strains of the minister's violin would wind up many a pleasant gathering.

In truth one of the charms of the Edinburgh of those days was its limited extent. The devotees of brush and pen saw more of each other than nowadays, for they could hardly leave their studios or libraries for an afternoon turn without encountering a dozen friends and rivals. Nowhere is this feature of Edinburgh society better recorded than in the vivid autobiography of Benjamin Haydon. He made his first visit to the north in 1820. "The season in Edinburgh," he remarks, "is the severest part of the winter. Princes Street in a clear sunset, with the Castle and the Pentland Hills in radiant glory, and the crowd illuminated by the setting sun was a sight perfectly original. First you would see limping Sir Walter, talking as he walked with Lord Meadowbank, then tripped

Jeffrey, keen, restless, and fidgety; you next met Wilson or Lockhart, or Allan, or Thomson, or Raeburn, as if all had agreed to make their appearance at once. It was a striking scene." No picturesque point escapes him. Wilson's "light hair, deep sea-blue eye, and tall, athletic figure" give him the impression of "a fine Sandwich Islander who had been educated in the Highlands." In Lockhart's "melancholy and Spanish head" he detects evidence of genius and mischief—the painter had been included in one of the attacks on the Cockney clique. "I never had a complete conception of Scotch hospitality till I dined at Geddes's with Sir Henry Raeburn and Thomson (who set Burns' songs to music), and a party of thirty at least. Thomson sang some of the songs of Burns with great relish and taste, and at the chorus of one, to my utter astonishment, the whole company took hands, jumped up, and danced to the tune all round till they came to their seats again, leaving me sitting in wonder. Raeburn was a glorious fellow and more boisterous than any."

In the summer of 1822 the northern capital was *en fête* on the occasion of the visit of George IV.—the first royalty had made since the union of the Parliaments. Wilkie and Geddes journeyed north with their young English friend, William Collins, in high spirits and with infinite consumption of snuff—Geddes's box exhausted before reaching Berwick—to take part in the proceedings and to commemorate the event. Of the doings of the three all may read in Cunningham's biography of Sir David and Wilkie Collins's life of his father; but for the artist community the proceedings culminated in the ceremony at Hopetoun House, where the King conferred the honour of

knighthood on Raeburn. It was the first honour of the sort that had come to a Scottish artist, and the recognition gave status—it could do no more—to a profession whose ranks were yearly increasing in numbers. Alas! within a year the kindly and genial painter was no more. From boyhood he had been familiar to the dwellers on the northern side of the city, and he had become so integral a part of Edinburgh society that his sudden and mysterious passing away in the fulness of his power was difficult to realise. Concerning his views and preferences in art little is known, but the pictorial record he has left of well-nigh half a century is a priceless legacy. As regards his character and personality all are agreed. A merry companion, with a fund of wit and humour which made him an acquisition even in days when such qualifications were by no means rare, he had none of the eccentricity in which the profession has been only too prolific. "I was confirmed," says Dr. John Brown in 'Horæ Subsecivæ,' "by the grandchildren as to the simple, frank, hearty nature of the man, his friendliness and cheery spirit, his noble presence—six feet two—and his simple, honest pleasures and happy life." Mrs. Ferrier's childish memories of the household at St. Bernard's, quoted in the same article, give a like impression, as do also Mr. Cumberland Hill's recollections. "He was greatly respected," says the latter, "in Stockbridge. He lived there in the midst of its people, who knew him and who loved him. To this day even we can recall his face and form with strange vividness. His large figure was encased in capacious upper garments; he wore, in addition, knee-breeches, black leggings, and a broad-brimmed hat. Apart from his genius, there was something massive in the man

himself." He was only sixty-seven, but he had lived to see greater changes and developments than most who have attained the fourscore. Above all, he had seen the rise of a native school of art, of which, without undue self-consciousness, he might consider himself the founder.

He had accompanied Sir Walter Scott and a few other friends on a week's tour in Fife, and had just resumed work, when he was suddenly attacked by a nameless illness, against which all medical skill was vain, and which closed his career on July 8, 1823. His statue, along with those of other notable Scotsmen, adorns the façade of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, and an anonymous admirer of his genius has placed a tablet to his memory in the burial-ground of St. John's Episcopal Church.

CHAPTER X

LANDSCAPE

In Scotland landscape as a vital art came late. In portrait and figure painting the northern may be said to be fairly abreast of the southern division of the island in point of time, but nearly half a century divides the painters who first seriously practised landscape in England and Scotland respectively—Richard Wilson and Alexander Nasmyth. Nor can it be said that the latter was of the same calibre as the Welshman. His work derived from the same source, but it lacks altogether the painter-like qualities which give distinction to Wilson's art. The latter was, indeed, the one great painter of the British school inspired by the tradition of Italian landscape.

But a new breath was about to stir the dry bones. The hide-bound classicism which exerted so baleful an influence on art generally had well-nigh stifled landscape. The ideals which inspired Claude and Gaspar Poussin had withered under the stricter art canons of the following century, so that during its latter half southern landscape survived only in the kindred architectural works of the Canali and Guardi. In Holland, where its origin had been so different, matters were still worse, and no painter of note represented the traditions of Ruysdael and Cuyp. The naturalistic tendency which set in towards the later

eighteenth century was a general movement, a reaction from long-accepted theories in many different directions. Amongst the contributing causes of the movement the writings of Rousseau have been assigned a prominent place. In this connection, it is interesting to find Muther, in his "History of Modern Painting," calling our countryman, James Thomson, the first great nature painter among the poets, and quoting Taine in support of his statement to the effect that, thirty years before Rousseau, the author of "The Seasons" had forestalled all his sentiments almost in the same style.* Every one is familiar with the keener observation of landscape in the poetry of the time. Sometimes it is held that Burns was an exception, and in support of the allegation it is pointed out that, though he lived for years within sight of the rugged peaks of Arran, he makes no allusion to them in his works. This is only another instance of the confusion so prevalent between scenery and the landscape with which art has to do. The former is gauged by extent of view or the number of striking objects embraced, the latter by the interest its possible æsthetic combinations may awaken. The former does not exclude artistic treatment, but, as a rule, the strength of the appeal is in proportion to the simplicity of the elements. Judged by these standards, Burns is perhaps more in sympathy with landscape than any of his contemporaries. He never dwells on scenic detail, but he has the much rarer power of suggesting with a few masterly touches. Often, as in "The Cotter's Saturday Night," or "The Jolly Beggars," he gives in an opening line or two a landscape setting which imprints

* "The History of Modern Painting." Richard Muther. London, 1895, vol. i. page 58.

itself indelibly on the mind, and acts as a kind of underchord all through the piece. The moonlit stream in "Halloween" is a nocturne in eight lines, whilst in "Tam o' Shanter," though the surroundings are only hinted at, one is conscious of a terrific landscape background all through.

As with David Allan in *genre*, Nasmyth's talent was insufficient to give impetus and direction to the new era in Scottish landscape painting. That was reserved for an amateur—the Rev. John Thomson, of Duddingston. Nevertheless, Nasmyth, like Allan, marks an epoch. Both seem to have felt that the old order was about to yield place to something more vital, and though neither could lead, they prepared the way for the stronger men who followed. The elder Nasmyth was a man of many accomplishments, a mechanical genius, an architect, and a landscape gardener as well as a painter; he had a great and deserved reputation in his native city and throughout Scotland. In his capacity as architect he designed the fine bridge* which spans the romantic gorge of the Water of Leith on the north-western boundary of the city, as well as the classic temple which guards St. Bernard's well half a mile lower down; and he was professionally consulted by the authorities in the laying out of the streets of the new town. In mechanics he was the inventor of what is known as the bow and string bridge, the principle of which has since been applied to the roofing of our great terminal railway stations, and he had much to do with the experiments of Miller and Symington in steam navigation. His son even claims for him the invention of the screw propeller; and in connection with this aspect of his talent, it is significant that to-day his portrait by

* The Dean Bridge; afterwards widened and completed by Telford.

Geddes hangs in the machinery department of South Kensington Museum beside those of Rennie and Smeaton and other great engineers and machinists. It was Nasmyth also whose ready wit suggested to the Duke of Atholl the means of clothing the rugged front of Craigiebarns with foliage by firing the seed inclosed in canisters from a cannon. Like his ancestors from a remote generation he was of quick intelligence and ready hand, and his long life was spent in a variety of activities. To those already mentioned he added that of scene painter, while his art classes shared with those of Graham the responsibility for the instruction of most of the Scottish painters of the following generation. His family inherited more or less the paternal abilities, and two of his sons have left their mark in different directions—Patrick, the artist, and James, the inventor of the steam hammer.

Alexander Nasmyth's faculties as a painter, whether of portrait or landscape, were not of a very high order. Most of his pictures are frankly based on the classic convention, like the *Stirling Castle* in the Scottish National Gallery, where the distance and middle distance are flanked by the greater and lesser clump of trees on either hand, with depths of brown regulated by their proximity to the foreground. In others one can feel a certain admixture of the coming naturalism, not always introduced with advantage to the picture. Of this class are *England's Capital*, *Colzean Castle*, *Wooded Landscape with Castle*, and two views of *Edinburgh*,* looking from and towards the Calton Hill respectively. The London picture—somewhat the same view as Constable's *Waterloo Bridge*—as well as the two of Edinburgh, were painted in 1825,

* In the possession of Sir David Baird, Bart., Newbyth.

when the artist was approaching seventy, and they go to prove that the veteran has not been unaffected by the new school of landscape which younger and abler men were leading, mostly in the south, but which would not be altogether unknown in Edinburgh. There is considerable dramatic power in the design of the other Newbyth pictures; and a small example at Riccarton*—some bend on the Water of Leith where a tall ash or willow strikes athwart a grey sky over a red-roofed house is quite modern in feeling. But at no time had Nasmyth much of the painter's delight in, or mastery over, his material; in this respect his pictures remain cold and timid to the end.

His son Patrick, who settled in London in 1808, when he was about twenty years of age, has long had a great reputation in London sale-rooms, where he is known as "the English Hobbema." Judged by the works at Trafalgar Square, the reputation seems scarcely deserved, though the resemblance to his Dutch prototype is unmistakable. Possibly the one has a good deal to do with the other, for, next to being a personality in art—and sometimes before it—is the faculty of being able to adopt that of some established reputation. He was little affected by the new and more vigorous exponents of landscape; in this respect, indeed, he seems to have had less of the open mind than his father. To one whose training was Ramsay's studio and the Italian journey, the classic convention came naturally enough; but it is difficult to understand how the younger man, with his considerable technical ability, and with Turner and Constable at his elbow, remained contented with the formulas of the seventeenth century. The *Landscape with Waterfall* and

* In the possession of Sir James Gibson Craig, Bart.

The Angler's Nook, in the National Gallery, have little but their resemblance to Hobbema to recommend them, and though the *View in Hampshire* and *The Severn off Portishead* show some feeling for English landscape, their elaboration of detail and fitting of parts are unsatisfying. Those browns and grey-greens and heavily-shadowed foregrounds were sanctioned by two centuries, but they fail in that more intimate interpretation of nature to which art was already awake. In a small picture of English scenery* the artist is seen to greater advantage. A sluggish stream flows by groups of park-like timber through low-lying meadows. A church tower and the red roofs of a village are seen in the middle distance, and to the right a level country recedes towards a range of low hills. The tree masses are finely silhouetted against a tender sky, while foreground and middle distance are flecked with quiet evening sunlight, which touches church tower, tree boles, and cattle wit a keener illumination. If there is much of this quality, it might go far to justify the reputation which still attaches to the name and work of the younger Nasmyth. His pictures are scarce north of the Border, and, as a rule, they have more affinity with the National Gallery examples than with that last described. Their technique is of the dexterous mechanical sort which takes no account of the mysterious or the infinite, but which, for that very reason, commended itself the more readily to the dilettanti. So it was that Backhuysen and the Dutch flower painters fared better at the hands of critics and connoisseurs than Rembrandt and Hals. Nasmyth lived an isolated life in London, which may partly account for the slight influence the work of his greater contem-

* In the possession of J. Brownlee Hunter, Esq., Edinburgh.

ENGLISH LANDSCAPE
By Patrick Nasmyth

poraries had on him. He died at Lambeth in 1831, a comparatively young man. Several of his sisters, notably Anne and Charlotte, wielded the brush with no small skill. A fine example of the latter, at Riccarton, shows a technique different from that of either her father or brother.

A more virile landscape art was already rising in the north. John and Andrew Wilson, John Thomson, and H. W. Williams were earlier in the field than Patrick Nasmyth, and three of them are stronger personalities. The Rev. John Thomson, of Duddingston, is the most widely known, partly from his unique combination of professions, but also on his merits as a painter. It is difficult to assign an artistic lineage for him. "His model," says Sir Walter Armstrong, "seems to have been Gaspas Poussin tempered by Claude and Wilson." That is as near the mark as one is likely to get, but, after all, he is mainly Thomson. He is a personality; and this is what lifts him above the Nasmyths, and makes him share with John Wilson the honour of having given the first impulse to the Scottish school of landscape. The way of the Nasmyths was a blind alley, that of the artists with whom we are now concerned led onwards, though by diverse paths, to the naturalistic movements of the two following generations. Their art, like all that is truly progressive, was no abrupt departure. There was nothing in it of the "protest" with which more recent movements have familiarised us. They carried with them a sufficiency of the formulas of the past to make their practice a true development; and in what contemporary records we have, there is no indication that it was regarded as in any way erratic. Yet in their works there is the breath of a new life.

Thomson was more intimately associated with native art than the others. He was little out of Scotland, and his subjects were mostly found within its borders. His clerical duties, to which he seems to have been always attentive, made visits to the Continent or longer sketching-tours difficult of attainment. The annual holiday and rapid transit which permits the parish minister a month's leisure in Italy, Egypt, or the Holy Land, were still in the distant future when the young Ayrshire pastor was placed at Duddingston in the autumn of 1805. An occasional Sunday off would be his opportunity for visiting his more distant sketching-grounds, whilst the shores of Fife, East Lothian, and Berwickshire were easily accessible within the week, even in the coaching days. This settlement in the immediate vicinity of the capital at the age of twenty-seven may be regarded as the beginning of his artistic career, for his month at Nasmyth's classes and his solitary sketching-rambles in the Dailly woods cannot have carried him far. But now he was within easy range of much that was stimulating both to the intellectual and artistic life. Within a year of his "call" he was on intimate terms with the best society Edinburgh could afford, Walter Scott, William Clerk of Eldin, and one or two other men of law having been ordained members of his session on March 30, 1806. But there was a society yet more inspiring for young Thomson. In the neighbouring city were the studios of Raeburn and George Watson, and under the presidency of the latter the Associated Artists were shortly to open their annual exhibitions. In his Ayrshire charge Thomson had distributed the products of his easel amongst his parishioners, but now, we are told, "orders began to pour in upon him from all quarters in such

numbers that, with all his rapidity of execution, he found difficulty in supplying the demands of his friends for his pictures." To the exhibitions of the Associated Artists he contributed, sparingly at first, but more freely towards their close. In the catalogues of the first two his name is not in the list of contributors, though he had pictures in both, but after 1813 he seems to have shaken off the fear of publicity, and takes his alphabetical place amongst the professionals. A few more years and he is a power in the art world, his name standing with those of Wilkie and other eminent artists on the Honorary list, first of the Royal Institution and then of the Scottish Academy.

During the thirty-five years of his artistic activity his brush was rarely idle. His biographer, Mr. Baird,* has catalogued 226 pictures in various well-known collections, but their total number must be much greater. In following Thomson's career through its consecutive stages one has to be contented with the facts deducible from the catalogues of the exhibitions to which he contributed. These give a rough idea of the localities he has been visiting, though it is unsafe to draw more than an inference from such data, seeing he worked largely from memory and from old sketches. This much seems to be certain, that during the earlier years of his ministry he did not go far afield for his subjects—the Lothians, Berwickshire, Fife, Lanark, and Ayrshire are the localities mostly indicated. Later, he adventures farther, seeing in succession much of the wilder and more inaccessible parts of the Highlands, the north-eastern coasts of Ireland, and making one or two raids across the Border. To the first six or eight years in his

* "John Thomson of Duddingston, Pastor and Painter." Wm. Baird, F.S.A. Edinburgh, 1895.

new home may be assigned most of those somewhat characterless works, for which the undulating country across the loch and the waters of the firth seen over the wooded grounds of Duddingston Park supply the subjects Indeed, till the close of the 1808–16 exhibitions, his works, to judge from their titles, are not of the nature associated with his genius. But ten years later he has found himself, as artists say, and in his contributions to the Institution the ruined castles and keeps which fringe the coasts and dominate the straths of his native country are leading features. After 1829 loch and glen furnish the *motifs;* castles are still numerous, but the sea no longer fascinates. Coruisk and Blaavin, the weird forest of Rothiemurchus and the solitudes of Kintyre make a stronger appeal to the emotional nature of the painter. In 1822 and 1824 he exhibited two of these more characteristic works, *Aberlady Bay* and *Fast Castle.* In the former he has adopted the scheme of warm greys, less usual in his practice than could be desired, which lends itself to a more natural lighting. Here and in similar pictures he may have been affected by the seascapes of John Wilson, who, though settled in London, was a contributor to the Scottish exhibitions. It is not quite clear which of Lord Kingsburgh's two pictures of *Fast Castle* is the one exhibited at the Royal Institution in 1824. If that from below—as is most likely—where the insignificant remains of "Wolf's Crag" are perched on the beetling cliffs to the right, it is the prototype of a class which included most of the seaward castles of Scotland, and culminated in the *Dunluce* of two years later. But few of these captivate the imagination as does this first essay on that rock-bound coast which furnished their original inspiration. In the later pictures

FAST CASTLE

By the Rev. John Thomson, *H.*R.S.A.

THE PROPERTY OF LORD KINGSBURGH

DUNLUCE CASTLE

the conventional creeps in, the steep cliffs are wreathed with foliage which seems strangely out of place, and the rocks which close in the composition of the foreground to right or left are conformed to a type which does duty for Tantallon, Dunluce, or Ravensheugh, as the case may be. In the *Fast Castle* the idealisation is on true lines; the character of the coast is conserved, and by an artistic exaggeration rendered more impressive. In *Fast Castle* from above, the sheer fall of the cliff, which, with its seaward battlements, shows light against the dark surface and high horizon of the ocean, is powerfully suggested. The castle tower is silhouetted against a breezy sky which casts flying gleams on the bold headlands to the right.

Of the large *Dunluce Castle*, it is hardly possible to speak to any purpose. The writer can remember seeing it some thirty years ago in company with Paul Chalmers. It was then in fairly good condition, and the impressionable pupil of Robert Lauder was enraptured with its power and grandeur. But like so many of the artist's works, it has been ruined by the bituminous base on which it was painted. A smaller version, still in good condition, in the possession of Lord Kingsburgh, serves to give some idea of a picture well known through Miller's engraving, but which has paid the extreme penalty of the asphaltum craze of the period. *The Martyrs' Tombs in the Moss of Lochinkelt, Galloway*, shows a mingling of the brown and grey manners of the painter—one might almost say of the conventional and more natural which these embody—for beyond a foreground of moss and loch and stream of the former, there is a mountainous landscape over which cloud shadows slowly wander, which conveys something of

the solemnity of those pastoral solitudes so sympathetically rendered a generation later by Sir George Harvey.

Thomson's later development can be traced in a series of works far too numerous to individualise. The *Dunure Castle*, seen from the landward side, in Lord Young's collection, is typical of those pictures where the objective is seen through a vista of flanking trees. Here the scheme is of gold and brown, and the atmospheric effect especially fine. Of the work of his later years the *View in Glen Feshie, Inverness-shire*,* belonging to the Earl of Stair, is one of the best. It was exhibited at the Scottish Academy in 1835, and represents the fruit of long experience, whilst the artist was yet in his working prime. Just at such a juncture many eminent artists have produced their most characteristic work. If *Glen Feshie* is hardly entitled to such pre-eminence, it can at least be said that, in its kind, it holds a leading place. To this interpretation of the pine forests which lie into the roots of the Grampians, Thomson has brought all those powers of imagination which, ten years earlier, he had expended on castle and cliff. The funereal masses of giant firs, the rank undergrowth, the gleam of rippling water which seems to hurry across the shadowed silence, and the vista of mountain pass, is no topographic transcript, but an embodiment of the mood engendered by such scenes, which all experience to some extent, but which only the artist who is also a dreamer can capture and make permanent. The broken and blasted members of those monarchs of Rothiemurchus, telling of storm and tempest, enhance by contrast the stillness of this enchanted wood and the delicious blue and white of the summer sky, whilst the

* At Oxenford Castle.

twinkle of antlers in the glade to the left suggests the bugle horn and all the romance associated with the hunter and the chase.

An adequate analysis of Thomson's technique is difficult. The fate which has overtaken the larger version of Dunluce has been shared by many of his best works. Even in those which have escaped total destruction the pigment has so often blackened, or the surface has got into so curious a condition—as if roasted—that one cannot speak with much certainty as to their craftsmanship. But taken in connection with the more direct work of his sketches and studies, there is ample evidence that Thomson was a born painter, that he had the delight in and command over his material which distinguish painting from mere coloured design. His defects lie in a different direction and were inevitable under the circumstances. He was an amateur, and as such, precluded from the thoroughness of technique which separates the trained artist from the ablest of those who devote to it only a portion of their energies. It is not only that, as Sir Walter Armstrong has observed, "like all amateurs he was very uncertain, alternating landscapes worthy almost of Richard Wilson" with performances "feeble enough for a school-girl"; even his successes betray the amateur. A want of knowledge of the underlying structure of things gives an air of unreality to his compositions. The tree boles lack sinewy strength, their boughs are regardless of the laws of ramification, the tumbled mountains of the middle distance, and the serrated peaks beyond are oftener fantastic than truly idealised; but nowhere is this defect more evident than in the switchback lines of the promontories which indent sea or lake, and in the family

likeness of the characterless ledges of rock in the foregrounds of many of his cliff and castle pictures.

It could not be otherwise. The long Divinity course and the pastoral duties of the country charge which came to him so early, absorbed the greater part of his time and attention during the period when the foundation of the painter's craft must be laid. And when, as he was nearing thirty, a fuller measure of artistic inspiration came to him with his change of surroundings, he had, perforce, to be content with the superficial knowledge acquired in his sketching rambles about Dailly and the facility afforded by the adoption of such conventions as came most readily to hand. This and his restricted opportunities of study prevented his sharing fully in the new movements of his time; but evidence is not wanting that, in other circumstances, he might have been a leader amongst the moderns. His sketches and studies now and again surprise by a perception of conditions of light and natural colour in advance even of his time. A small *Fast Castle*,* with wind and wave for once at rest, literally swims in a translucency of light; whilst of those in his more usual golden brown key, some are wonderfully satisfying in the depth and richness of their restricted harmonies. But such were intermittent, the result of a sudden carrying out of himself by something seen and strongly felt. He mostly pursues the old paths, which enabled him to produce steadily, unaffected by the bewilderment of conditions which would have entailed a revision of formulas and a whole-hearted devotion impossible for one in his position. At all events, the facility with which he worked, and the readiness with which his pictures were absorbed all over

* In the possession of D. MacDonald, Esq., Greenock.

Scotland, stimulated a branch of painting which till then had found little favour north of the Tweed. He may be said also to have awakened Scottish painters to the pictorial possibilities of their country. The greater part of the work of his three contemporaries was English or foreign in subject. John Wilson deals mostly with the shipping of the Thames estuary and the Dutch coasts; Andrew depicts the harbours and towns of the Mediterranean under Claude-like effects; whilst Williams went farther afield than either to the plain of Marathon and "Sunium's marbled steep." True, Thomson's delineations of our lochs and bens and glens, and of those castles that o'erlook "the foam of perilous seas" are as much generic as local; but the minister of Duddingston gave the lead, and he gave it grandly, to those later painters who have better interpreted the native accent of Scottish landscape. The feebler productions of his studio are very numerous, but, when one knows where to find them, there are not a few which give him a place amongst the masters of landscape art. For vigour of conception and imaginative power none of his Scottish followers have excelled him.

John Wilson, who, after an apprenticeship with one of the Nories, and two years as a drawing-master in Montrose, spent the remainder of his long life in London, is yet intimately associated with Scottish art. He had already been ten years in the south before the Associated Artists commenced their exhibitions. To these he contributed only once. Nor was his work much seen at the Institution. He was a sympathiser with the movement which resulted in the founding of the Scottish Academy, of which he became an honorary member. In the south, after having been

employed as a scene-painter at Astley's, he early began to exhibit at the Royal Academy, and he was an original and long adhering member of the Society of British Artists.

From the beginning, Wilson seems to have found his *rôle*, and to have kept to it with little variation for half a century. The landscape and coast line of southern England, and the neighbouring shores of France and Holland, supply his subjects, with now and then a stray canvas embodying the result of some visit to the north. Owing to the similarity of the titles, it is difficult to refer his pictures to their various periods; but the sea and coast scenes gain on the inland subjects during his later practice, and the artist's reputation is mainly associated with these. He delights in the grey-green waters of the North Sea or of the Channel, when the flying clouds silver or darken their retreating surface; and in the picturesque craft whose tightened or flapping sails or bare spars tell dark or light against the sky. He deals little with the open sea, and even when the point of view is from amongst the shipping, there is generally on one hand or other the low line of shore at no great distance. The unnamed picture—No. 259 in the Scottish National Gallery, dated 1832—is an example, not of the best, being somewhat forced in its contrasts and puny in its forms. Wilson is seen to better advantage in two works of a similar nature in Lord Young's collection. In the larger a sloop with loosened sheets and a small boat occupy the left; at some distance, a white sail tells strongly against a grey sky, whilst numerous other craft are seen farther off. The sea is dark in the left foreground and towards the right horizon. In the other, the composition is, as it were, reversed, a group of picturesque shipping with a boat making towards them, being on the

right, and one with two dark sails on the left. Beyond are seen the spires and towers of a town, and a low shore where a windmill catches the light. The thousand and one combinations to be got out of such elements enable the artist to ring endless changes on these two favourite arrangements. The sails, mellow white or tawny brown, the polished prows, the finer detail of yard and shroud and cordage, the incisive colour in the dresses of sailor or fisher-folks, with the more delicate hues of fluttering pennons, give a field which, in the hands of a capable painter, there is no exhausting. But within his limitations, Wilson has a keen eye for Nature's different moods. It is not always a racket of wind and wave, of flying light and shadow. On the broad waters of the Maas *A Ferry Boat** with its living freight moves slowly over its own reflections ; the sail is set, but it hangs loose, as does that of the hay barge in front, and oar and pole are in requisition. On one hand a distant town shows livid against a portentous thundercloud, on the other the oily surface of the river is silvered by a sky of luminous grey. On this setting of sky and shadowed waters, the brown sailed boat and the positive colours of passengers and live stock tell with the strange vividness which precedes a storm. Wilson's landscape proper is not so well known, but that it shares the qualities of the coast pieces may be learned from the bright little panel, *Landscape and Cattle*,† where a man on a grey pony drives two cows—a red and a black—through low marshy ground. Here the wind-blown trees and rushes and low-lying distance are admirably associated with the strongly marked forms and colours of the animals ; it has all the sparkle of a Cox.

* In the National Gallery of Scotland.

† In the Kelvingrove Museum.

In considering Wilson's qualities as a painter, one cannot fail to note the contrast he presents with Thomson. Their ways of seeing or conceiving and their methods of execution differ almost as widely as could be. The professional's art is limited in range compared with that of the amateur; the imaginative faculty comes little into play, those marines and landscapes of Wilson's being pictorial rather than emotional. This means a different temperament, but does not of itself imply inferiority. In other directions the contrast is equally marked. In his manner of seeing, Wilson was abreast of his time; Thomson lingered amongst the old masters. In the main, the evolution of modern painting, especially of landscape, has been from dark to light, from brown to grey; and where Thomson, as a rule, is brown, Wilson is grey. Wilson has also the professional man's more thorough knowledge within his own sphere, he knows the sea and ships and boats, the wooden piers, and towers and sand dunes of the coasts he loved; and these he combines and handles with a suppleness to which the other is a stranger. And though, like some of his contemporaries, at times he over-emphasises the ambers and siennas of hull and prow in his slanting luggers, he comes a long way nearer the true conditions of colour and light than did Thomson. But with all this admitted, Thomson was the greater artist.

Andrew Wilson is better known through the part he took in the formation of various British collections, and his relations with other artists and connoisseurs than as a painter After some lessons from Alexander Nasmyth, and a few years at the Royal Academy schools, at some risk, owing to Continental troubles, he proceeded to Rome. There, like Ramsay and Gavin Hamilton, he fell a prey to the study

of ancient art, as much in its architectural and archæological aspects as from the painter's point of view. He brought home with him, says Brydall, "many sketches of architectural monuments and similar subjects about Naples as well as Rome." His stay in this country was short. Perceiving the demand there was for old masters, and the advantage his already acquired knowledge would be in dealing with the possessors of such, he determined to return to Italy. Not without difficulty he reached Genoa—it was 1803, the year of threatened invasion. Settling there he was elected a member of the Ligurian Academy, and it was concerning one of his pictures exhibited in Genoa that Napoleon is said to have made the retort—"Le talent n'a pas de pays," when, stopping to admire it, he was informed that it was the work of an Englishman. During a three years residence in Italy at this time Wilson succeeded in purchasing and bringing to this country many valuable pictures. In 1818 he was appointed Master of the Trustees' Academy, where he had as pupils several who subsequently left their mark on Scottish art, Robert Lauder, David Scott, and William Simson amongst others. About 1826 he resigned his appointment and returned to Italy, where he spent the remaining twenty-two years of his life in various cities of the peninsula, practising his art and collecting and transmitting to this country many important examples of the great masters. Like Hamilton's half a century earlier, his house, when he was in Rome, became a rendezvous for Scottish painters visiting the Italian capital. He figures largely in Wilkie's letters and journals, and later there is frequent reference to him in those of David Scott. He had the advice and assistance of the former in carrying through some of his

most important purchases, notably of the Vandycks now in the Scottish National Gallery, and those secured for the Earl of Hopetoun and Sir Robert Peel.

Such a career almost precluded the attainment of any great distinction as an executant. But that Andrew Wilson was a capable, if not a brilliant painter may be seen in various works both of home and foreign subjects. Those at the Mound scarcely show him at his best. The *Burntisland* has more of the Mediterranean than of the Forth in its lighting, and is characterised by those vertical and horizontal lines which give an artificial aspect to much of his work. This treatment is more appropriate where architectural features are prominent, as in many of his Roman and Genoese pictures. The smaller *View of Tivoli* and *Ruins of Hadrian's Villa* are fair though trifling examples of his Italian manner. Better specimens both of his Scotch and foreign work may be seen in Lord Kingsburgh's collection, where, in a view taken from about Aberdour, the still waters and undulating shores of our Scottish estuary are painted under a sky which better suits them than the Claude-like atmosphere of the *Burntisland*. In various other native landscapes in the same collection a different note is struck, and a manner resembling that adopted later by E. T. Crawford is successfully used, especially in two canal scenes. *On the Tiber near Rome* gives a favourable idea of Wilson in a nature of subject with which David Roberts familiarised us in after years. In a smaller picture of *An Italian Town** the Claude-like effect of evening sunlight is more appropriately used than in that of the Fifeshire seaport.

Hugh W. Williams, though a native of Wales, early

* Belonging to Alix Inglis, Esq., Edinburgh.

established himself in Edinburgh, and his professional life, with the exception of the time spent in Italy and Greece, was passed in the Scottish capital. He contributed to the exhibitions of the Associated Artists after 1810, chiefly views in the Highlands, then just opened to a wider public by the publication of "The Lady of the Lake." His "Travels in Italy, Greece and the Ionian Islands," published in 1820, and *Select Views in Greece*, issued 1827-9, earned for him the title "Grecian" Williams, by which he has since been generally known. Fortunately, his work, both Scottish and foreign, is well seen in the collection at the Mound, where, moreover, a large drawing, *Caerphilly Castle, South Wales*, shows that once, at least, towards the close of his life, he had revisited the Principality. Williams may almost be said to have introduced the practice of water-colour north of the Tweed—the earlier tinted drawings can hardly be considered such—and what surprises one most in some of his Scotch drawings—that of *Glencoe* for instance, exhibited in 1812—is their modernness. Here the hill forms are broadly and boldly washed in in true colour of Nature, almost as they might have been by Cox or Bough. The same can hardly be said of many of his foreign drawings, which are executed in tones little removed from the tinted work just referred to. These, however, lend themselves better to the arid landscape of Southern Europe than to the full fresh colour of the Highlands. Had he given himself more to the study of native landscape, Williams might have become a stronger influence in the Scottish school; but, in electing Italy and Greece for his sketching-ground, he obeyed the strong impulse which was then beginning to send British painters abroad, not for

the study of the old masters, but to find a new field in the manners, the costume, and the natural features of countries hitherto almost unknown, and to which the genius of Byron was drawing the attention of an ever increasing public. Many of these drawings were made for purposes of engraving, and from that point of view, their more monotonic scheme would be an advantage rather than otherwise. Whether the conventional tone was dictated by such considerations, or only by the more restricted gamut of less humid skies, is immaterial, for their charm lies rather in the daintiness with which his simple scheme and dexterous hand describe the picturesque surfaces and features of rocky headland and pillared temple, than in the force or realistic quality of their colour.

This skill of craft—especially indispensable in water-colour—distinguishes Williams' drawings generally, but now and again he rises to a highly poetic conception of his theme, as notably in the *Plain of Marathon.** Its elements are simple; local colour is suppressed, not here by any conventional scheme, but because of the hour chosen. Seen from a high foreground, under the mysterious glamour of night, the historic plain stretches to where in the distance a narrow strait separates it from the serrated ridges of Eubœa. Behind those mountains that "look on Marathon" the moon rises, its disc, only partly seen as yet, reflected in the waters of the strait and of a stream that winds seaward. Sombre masses of foliage diversify the foreground slopes, where a Greek muses with elbow rested on a rock. One can say no more than that the picture is

* This picture is said to have been painted from a sketch by C. R. Cockerell.

THE PLAIN OF MARATHON

By Hugh William Williams

THE PROPERTY OF LORD KING

worthy of its theme and the memories it recalls. And here again, as always, the technique goes hand in hand with the sentiment. But for the luminous and vibrant quality of those washes of darker or lighter tones which suggest the near and the far and the infinite, rising moon, star-spangled sky, and contemplative patriot would have been only cheap sentiment and tawdry trick. A replica at the Mound has not the full charm of the larger drawing which is in the possession of Lord Young.

The Temple of Minerva Sunias is a drawing of unusual size—50 by 30 ins. Such dimensions are not favourable to the medium, and most water-colours on this scale lack the strength necessary to carry them off with success. Nor can it be said that the work under consideration escapes this defect. The coloration is attenuated and thin, and the handling inadequate to the scale. But the central passage of the picture, where the marble columns of the Temple tell white against a stormy sky, is strikingly fine. The architecture is painted with a touch at once free and delicate, the detail of pillar and architrave lovingly recorded by a hand and eye sensitive to all the beauty of proportion and structure of a kindred art. Though the picture is not emotional in the sense of the *Marathon,* those marble relics of a worship long vanished, enswathed in a passing gleam of sunshine, supply that touch of sentiment which saves it from being a mere architectural drawing. For this one can forgive the not very convincing tones of brown rocks and neutral sea, and the conventional treatment of the foreground generally. Two drawings of almost equal size, but executed in fuller tones, *View of Athens from the East* and *The Temple of Jupiter Olympius*, are in the

collection at Raith. There are unfinished replicas of both at the Mound. Williams is known to have used the stronger medium, but his oil works are seldom seen. A small canvas in Kelvingrove Museum is not of such quality as to cause one to regret this. His "Travels in Italy, Greece, and the Ionian Islands" were in the form of letters inscribed respectively to his friends the Rev. John Thomson and Mr. George Thomson. They abound, especially those from Florence and Rome, in an independent and sometimes vigorous criticism of the pictures in the various galleries. His estimate of contemporary Italian Art is by no means high; in no branch of painting does he think Britain need fear comparison, and it is to his own country that he looks for a revival of the splendours of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Besides Nicholson, several Newcastle men were attracted by the art movement in Edinburgh. During the ten years succeeding the establishment of the Academy, John Ewbank took a prominent position as a painter of landscape and marine subjects, and his townsman, Fenwick, worked on the same lines. Ewbank was a painter of considerable talent. His sea-pieces especially, which show the influence of John Wilson and a certain phase of Turner's work, exhibit a fine sense of composition, and an evenness of surface well suited to the moderate scale on which the best of them are painted, and to the expanses of sea and sky with which he dealt. Such characteristics link them with similar pictures by Simson, though he hardly attains either the quality of colour or the lightness of touch of the more versatile Academician. They are generally composed on the lines introduced, or at all events largely made use of by Wilson, which the picturesque craft of those days

enabled the painter to vary *ad infinitum*. Suchlike Ewbanks are to be found in various Scotch collections. Of his harbour pieces, *Leith Harbour* * may be taken as an average example. Here the crowded schooners in front, with sails hanging limp or furled, make a picturesque *ensemble* with the low bridge in the middle distance and the irregular line of houses beyond. Sails, masts and spars, the tiled or slated roofs, and a more distant spire to the right are backed by a luminous sky, whilst one or two floating timber rafts with figures give variety to the foreground. The arrangement of light and shade is happy, but the handling is heavier than in the smaller canvases just referred to. The darker shadows lack the transparency which so often in this manner of painting redeems the overwarmth of the umber *fond*, nor is the detail of spar and cordage touched with all the dexterity that could be desired. Even the *Canal Scene with Shipping*, at the Mound, wants that last suppleness of touch which gives ease and grace to Simson's treatment of similar subjects. And here one observes that contrasting of warm whites, buffs, and siennas with umber shadows and the neutral tones of sea and sky, as also the thin, almost water-colour method of using their material, which characterised a certain phase of contemporary landscape. The quality of the colour in this canal scene—it resembles more a broad river like the Maas—is fine, especially in the sky, and the whole is suffused with a mellow glow which harmonises its cooler and warmer tones.

Ewbank's inland pieces are by no means equal to his marines. There is a something emasculated in much of the landscape of this period. Its chiaroscuro is forced,

* In the possession of Patrick Blair, Esq., Edinburgh.

and the opposition of brown with whitish tones imparts an anæmic aspect to the scenes depicted. When more positive colour is used, it breaks out in spots like the hectic flush on the cheek of the consumptive. Unsubstantial—not truly ideal—such compositions reflect a phase of thought or feeling characteristic of the time, not in Great Britain only, but throughout Europe, a sort of aftermath of Byronism and "The Sorrows of Werther," which affected both literature and painting. In Germany there are the sentimental Düsseldorfers; in France, Ary Scheffer and the Italian peasants of the unfortunate Leopold Robert. In England it is the age of Keepsakes, Books of Beauty, and the meretricious imaginings of John Martin. It has its stronger side, which inspired the romantic conceptions of Delacroix and the later works of Turner. To the strong it lends an additional grace, lifting their work above the prosaic; to the less robust, it is an element of danger. In Scotland there was, unfortunately, no landscape painter of sufficient stamina and sensibility to develop the possibilities of an influence where the truly poetic lay so near to the merely sentimental, and its weakness, rather than its strength, is reflected in the works of Hill and Stanley and Fenwick, and of Ewbank when he forsakes his true element, the sea.

Hill had considerable talent as a landscapist, but his abilities were dissipated in various directions, latterly in the painting of a large figure picture commemorative of the Disruption, which has only a historic interest to commend it. Incidentally, and partly in connection with the painting of this picture, he worked with great enthusiasm at photography, then in its earlier stages, and, in conjunction with Mr. Adamson, of St. Andrews, produced a series of

works which, from an artistic point of view, are still unrivalled. These, which have come to be known as "Hill's Calotypes," form an invaluable record of the generation to which they belong. Almost from its foundation till his death in 1869 Mr. Hill was Secretary to the Scottish Academy, and as his time was given unsparingly to its interests, it is small wonder there is little to point to in the way of achievement in his own department. One of his more important works, *Edinburgh from the Castle*, is well known from the engraving. Another, *The Valley of the Nith*, is in Lord Young's collection at Silverknowe. Both are scenic in character, and exhibit in various ways the influences already referred to. In his illustrations to "The Land of Burns," Hill depicts with a touch of true romance the country made famous by the poet.

The work of Fenwick and Montague Stanley is little known, though both had some reputation in their day. Two good examples of the former are in the possession of Lord Young—one, *A View on the Forth near Stirling*, the other a large composition of lake, mountain and meadow. In both the merits and defects of his master Ewbank, and of the school of landscape to which they belong, are apparent: the luminous skies and fine aerial distances, marred by forcing of effect and colour in the former, and by the ruddy brown tones of the dark foreground in the latter. Stanley's work had all the weaker elements, with few of the redeeming qualities, of the two Northumbrians. He had left the stage from conscientious motives, and to this what reputation he had was largely owing. His abilities were not of a high order, and he carried much of his earlier into his adopted profession. Robert Gibb, with much of the same scenic element in his compositions, had a touch of

the coming realism, his work allying itself in this respect with that of E. T. Crawford.

William Simson is difficult to class, as he painted with almost equal facility in various *genres*. Landscape, landscape with figures, portraits, animals, interiors, still life, marines, and historical pictures seemed alike to interest him. In this respect he was a kind of Scottish Bonington. With the Associated Artists he exhibits mostly Scotch landscapes and coast studies; at the Institution his versatility is seen in most of the departments enumerated above. This variety is continued in the works shown at the Scottish Academy, but after his removal to London, about 1838, he confined himself almost entirely to figure subjects. He is considered here amongst the landscapists, because he is best known by his *Solway Moss* and two or three smaller canvases at the Mound. Simson's work shows various influences. His little diploma *Landscape*, in which a heron sits motionless by the brown stream under a shady bank, suggests Gainsborough—alike in its luminous sky, its combinations of colour, and the feathery grace with which the foliage is touched. Constable is as clearly felt in the large landscape *Auchendennan Bridge*,* where the artist has realised much of the strain and stress of Nature in motion. Two smaller canvases,* *Eel-traps on the Orwell*, and *A Suffolk Village*, though they deal with Constable's own country, have less of the East Anglian master in their manner. As in the two small panels at the Mound, *Scene in Holland* and *Passage Boats becalmed on the Maas, Dort*, a method is employed of which Simson himself is the best exponent. Umbers, reinforced one way or another with more positive colour, and of semi-

* In the possession of Alex. Inglis, Esq., Edinburgh.

TWELFTH OF AUGUST

By William Simson, R.S.A.

IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF SCOTLAND

transparent consistency, form the shadows. More body is added as the lighter surfaces are dealt with, but, even at its thickest, the handling resembles a glutinous wash rather than oil painting as it is mostly practised. The style, which would look flimsy on a larger scale, suits admirably those little panels where the edge of the wash describes the form of hull or tree or thatch almost as in an accomplished water-colour. It is this fluency, quite as much as their lightsome combinations of colour, that gives a peculiar charm to the two Dutch river bits, and character to those dealing with Suffolk and the homes of its rural inhabitants. A similar technique is used in the delightful sketch *Twelfth of August*, where two sportsmen mounted on ponies, with attendant keepers and dogs, are seen on a heathery moor with blue hills beyond. Here the neutral colours of the costumes, and the mellow white and bay of the animals, form a sober harmony with the luminous grey sky against which they are relieved, and the picturesque touch is in keeping with the *plein air* of the breezy uplands.

Simson's most impressive landscape is the *Solway Moss* in the Scottish National Collection. From a dark foreground, where a herd-boy rests beside his charge, the eye wanders over a rolling country to a distant mountain range steeped in the amber glow of evening. The cattle, darker and lighter, and a shimmer of water, diversify the shadowed foreground, a smoke drifts across the middle distance, while above, soft clouds swim in a golden vapour which merges sky and landscape. To most Scotsmen there is a charm about the scenery of the borders, and a fictitious value is apt to attach to the art which deals with it. But here the appeal is not to that deeply-rooted sentiment.

This combination of consenting forms and luminous vapours affects equally those who know and those who are ignorant of the romance of the debatable land; for the appeal is to the æsthetic sense through the painter's special medium of line and colour.

Simson's portrait and figure-work is less known, being almost unrepresented in our public collections. Of the former, a small head of a lady in a cap with pale blue ribbons has all the charm of touch which characterises his small panels in other *genres*. Another, painted just before his death, of his brother David, shows a fuller brush and a less restrained handling. One of his last works, *Gil Blas introduces Himself to Laura*, shows a looseness and bravura hardly compensated for by the evident gusto with which the scene has been portrayed, while his colour and handling show to advantage in a sketch of *Gipsies* painted about the same time. Of his more important figure pictures, Redgrave says *Cimabue and Giotto, Columbus and his Child at the Convent of Santa Maria di Robida*, and others shown in London on his return from Italy, gained him much notice, but that his subsequent works did not maintain the expectation these had raised. The wonder is that he accomplished what he did, for with the versatility of a certain order of the artistic temperament, his talent wanted the strength necessary for a many-sided success. But his daintily manipulated small panels, and the more substantial technique of *Solway Moss*, give sufficient evidence that Simson also was a master of his craft. He seems to have been of delicate constitution, and died at the early age of forty-seven.

It is impossible to draw a hard and fast line separating the different phases of art, but one may say that with

Simson, Ewbank, Fenwick and Hill there passed away a type of Scottish landscape. Macculloch, Crawford, and Harvey, though only a few years younger, lived to take part in later manifestations; even Roberts, born in 1796, one thinks of as more modern in his work than those dealt with in this chapter. At all events, its very different nature makes it convenient to consider him apart.

CHAPTER XI

DUNCAN, HARVEY, R. S. LAUDER

With the consolidation of the Scottish Academy a new group of painters begins to attract attention. Their birth-dates range from 1803 to 1807. Two of these, Grant and Macnee, have been considered amongst the successors of Raeburn. Robert Scott Lauder, George Harvey, Thomas Duncan, William Dyce, and David Scott, figure-painters, with Macculloch and Crawford, landscapists, complete the group. Of the former, Duncan and Harvey best ally themselves with Wilkie and Allan. In certain aspects of their work the two painters just named may be bracketed with Robert Lauder, for they were all three more or less affected by the writings of Scott. That influence was world wide, but, naturally, in many of its aspects it appealed specially to his countrymen. In its romance, its picturesqueness, and its portrayal of character, its effect on Scottish painting was almost immediate. Wilkie and Allan, it is true, in their pictures from Scottish history kept mostly by the chroniclers and historians, even where the subjects had been touched by the wand of the magician, but the rising generation of painters realised the mine of wealth Sir Walter had bequeathed to them, and in such works as *Prince Charles Edward and the Highlanders entering Edinburgh after the Battle of Preston* and *Prince*

Charles Edward asleep in a Cave, by Duncan; *The Trial of Effie Deans* and *The Bride of Lammermoor*, by Lauder, one has proof of it. With Harvey the influence though not so obvious is no less real, for not only are his *Battle of Drumclog* and other Covenanting scenes redolent of the word-painting of "Old Mortality," but the more intimate national character he infuses into those incidents and pastimes of Scottish life he loved to paint must be largely due to one who did more than any other to awaken and preserve that sentiment. Another influence in which his brother artists hardly share makes itself felt in Harvey's more serious work, the religious, or it might be more correct to say, the ecclesiastical movements of the time. Though not a member of the national Church, he was a keen sympathiser with the spirit which had been long at work over the length and breadth of Scotland, and which culminated in the Disruption of 1843. That movement was, in the main, a reaction from the *moderatism* of the eighteenth to the more evangelical tenets of the preceding century. Naturally, this was accompanied by a tendency to sublimate the deeds of those who in the "killing times" defied the arm of the civil magistrate, and often sealed their testimony with their blood. The enthusiasm of the later had a good deal in common with that of the earlier time: hence the impassioned periods of contemporary orators and writers, and those sympathetic renderings of the conventicles and communions of the Covenanters by the painter of the hardly less striking incidents of 1843.

Though portraits predominate during Duncan's short professional career, it is evident from the beginning that he is a subject painter in a different sense altogether from

Watson Gordon, Graham Gilbert and Macnee, who interspersed their portraiture with figure-subjects in about the same proportion. Duncan regards it merely as a means to an end, the end being the working out of the elaborate figure-compositions with which his name is associated. The fact that, of the subjects he contributed to Scottish exhibitions, eleven, and these by far the most important, were inspired by the writings of the author of "Waverley," is sufficient proof of the influence dwelt on above. The earliest of his pictures known to the writer—the finished sketch for *Jeanie Deans and the Robbers*, exhibited in 1831—is unfortunately so badly gone that it is impossible to say much about it. The next, of six years later date, *Anne Page inviting Slender to Dinner*, is finely representative of the artist, and forms one of the attractions of the National Collection. He has escaped for a moment from Scott. The subject, painted on a panel 54 × 42 inches, upright, is from the opening scene of "The Merry Wives of Windsor." Mistress Anne leans on the balustrade of an outside stair to invite the would-be reluctant Slender, who grimaces at her from below, whilst from an open window Falstaff and one of his boon companions make merry at the interview. A liver-and-white dog snuffs at Slender from the steps, and behind, a boy approaches with materials for the feast. The lady wears a low-cut bodice with loose sleeves of flowered plum-colour, a full yellow skirt and coquettish little hat. Slender is gorgeously arrayed in a dark green sleeved doublet, with cherry tights; a round feathered cap sits jauntily on his head and a white fluted ruff encircles his neck. His right hand holds up gingerly the skirt of his cloak, as if better to show its richly-patterned folds. The characterisation in

both heads is delightful. The humour of the immortal comedy is there, without being over-emphasised, either in facial expression or in the action and gesture which accompany it. In technique also the picture shows Duncan at his best, and it is eminently characteristic of his palette. The flesh painting in the two principal figures is closely wrought and highly finished, perhaps a trifle over much so in the charming features and bust of Mrs. Anne; in the shadowed faces of Falstaff and his companion a looser treatment is adopted, a manner approximating and tending to assimilate them with the background, of which indeed, they form part With most colourists there is a predilection for certain combinations which give a personal note to their gift. Duncan delights in varieties of maroon, cherry, and puce, and in harmonising or contrasting such with olives, ruddy browns, or a full note of yellow. Green he uses in a modified way, blue he avoids. So that his pictures, on the whole, are in a warm key. The cooler tones in which blue is usually so large a factor, are furnished by the more neutral shades of the plum-colours and greens of his draperies. An analysis of the picture under consideration shows everywhere these combinations and contrasts. The technique of costume and accessories is typical of Scottish figure-painting of the period. Glazings and scumblings are much in evidence, the breadths of shadow are fine in surface and of transparent or semi-transparent material. But Duncan does not shirk the impasto where it can be used with effect; the yellow skirt is painted with a full brush, at once light-handed, crisp, and fluent, expressing perfectly the quality of the brocaded fabric. The looser handling of the background, the glimpse of sky and its reflected sheen on the smooth woodwork of

the stair and the glass of the open casement are all skilfully used to give an appropriate setting to the scene and variety to the arrangement.

The following year, 1838, the artist reverts to Sir Walter in scenes from "Ivanhoe" and "The Heart of Midlothian," and, after an interval of portraiture, there comes the first of his two illustrations of the '45. Neither is taken directly from Scott, but they are none the less inspired by the writer who invested that tale of "sixty years since" with an abiding interest. The pictures express severally the short-lived triumph and the lowest ebb of the last warlike venture of the Stuarts. In the first, the young Prince, fresh from the success of Preston, and attended by the Duke of Perth and Lord George Murray, rides at the head of his Highlanders through a mingled throng of enthusiastic supporters and secret enemies towards Holyrood. In the other he is seen a hunted fugitive, worn by weeks of wandering and hair's-breadth escapes, stretched asleep in a mountain cave, the watchful Flora and his trusted Highlanders keeping guard by his side. The cave and its inmates are weirdly lit by the flickering faggots in the foreground. A sudden alarm of some passing stag has startled the watchers; and their alert yet cautious action, contrasted with the peaceful slumbers of the central figure, gives dramatic interest to the scene. In the earlier picture, where the figures are on a smaller scale, the colour-scheme is in consonance with the occasion. White satins and the gaiety of the royal tartan are conspicuous. But its peculiar charm is the dainty delineation of character in the male, and of beauty in the female groups, which perpetuate the features of many of the artist's friends and contemporaries. In the other a deeper and richer note has been struck. It

was the product of his last years, and allies itself technically with the portrait of himself painted at the same time. These two pictures were exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1840 and 1843 respectively, with the result that in 1844 Duncan was elected an associate. In 1845 the portrait of himself appeared at the Royal Academy as by "the late Thomas Duncan."

The only subject-pictures of note which followed *Prince Charles in the Cave* were *The Martyrdom of John Brown of Priesthill*,* and *Cupid*.† Both are fine works. In the former he touches on the sphere of Harvey, whilst in the latter he essays the field of fancy associated with William Etty and David Scott. In the *Cupid* there is, over and above the qualities found in the pictures already considered, a decorative colour-scheme united with a largeness and beauty of design which augured great things for the future. Alas! with the flight of the Love-god the spirit of Thomas Duncan took its departure. He left on the easel an unfinished sketch for what, to judge from a calotype in the possession of the writer, would have been an advance on anything he had accomplished, *George Wishart dispensing the Sacrament in the Castle of St. Andrews.*

Duncan has only further to be considered as a painter of portraits. During his earlier years these are of indifferent quality. Even in 1837–8, when he had already painted the *Anne Page*, his bust portrait of *Lady Stuart of Allanbank*‡ is far from satisfactory; having neither the individual character, nor even the qualities of execution one would have expected from the painter of the Shake-

* In the Kelvingrove Museum, Glasgow.
† In the possession of Lady Macnee.
‡ In the National Gallery of Scotland.

pearean picture. But in this department also Duncan was capable of high achievement. The small head of *Mrs. Morris*, and *Mrs. Charles Finlay and Child*, show his capacity in the direction of female portraiture, whilst in the three-quarter length of himself the artist may be said, by a supreme effort, to have placed himself in line with the masters just before the final darkness came.*

The *Mrs. Morris*, from its small dimensions—the panel is only 11 × 8 inches—allies itself with the figure-work of his later period. It shows the artist at his best, if one may speak so of a work where a colourist has restricted himself to black and white. In *Mrs. Charles Finlay and Child*, a three-quarter length of the size of life, Duncan is himself again, revelling in colour. The beautiful features, partly shadowed, the light brown hair in side curls and back knot, no less than the costume, recall the early portraits of Queen Victoria by Wilkie and Hayter. Her figure shadows the child, whose face nevertheless glows with reflected light; and these varied breadths of flesh with their softly modulated surfaces are skilfully wrought into a general scheme of crimson and russet and ruddy brown, which opposes itself to the vivacious brushwork and sharply accented folds of the lady's dress, and to the softer whites of that of her daughter.

But it is from the three-quarter length of himself† that one can best judge of what Duncan might have accomplished in portraiture. Placed betwixt Gainsborough's *Mrs. Graham* and Raeburn's *Mrs. Hamilton*, with three of the finest male portraits of the Scottish master over

* For some time before his death Duncan was blind.

† Purchased and presented by fifty Scottish artists to the Royal Scottish Academy in 1845.

against it, it yields little to any of them as a work of art, and nothing to the latter as an example of virile portraiture. The scheme is one of deep olives, in which the massive head and the right hand laid by cheek and chin tell with extraordinary force. Of secondary lights, in the conventional sense there are none; only the mysterious sheen, more or less felt, on the various fabrics, the cherry lining of the coat lapel and one or two warmer tones on the lower part of the canvas, give variety and the feeling of space and atmosphere. Duncan is seen full front. The lighting is that so much affected by Raeburn, but the result is less conventional. The modelling is more searching and the surface more finely felt through all its variations of tone, though the flesh lacks something of the spontaneity of the earlier master's technique. A shadowy aureole of wavy brown hair, accented by light hatching, interposes betwixt the strongly lit brow and the background. In later times Paul Chalmers made frequent use of the same strongly illumined flesh and dark surroundings. Here, as often in the work of the more recent painter, the Rembrandtish theory is carried to the verge of a fault.

In his long series of figure-pictures Harvey illustrated Scottish life in a greater variety of its aspects than any member of the school, and in this sense, at least, he is the most truly national. In discussing the *genre* pictures of Wilkie, it was pointed out that after the date of *The Blind Fiddler* they become more or less cosmopolitan in character. His early removal to London made this inevitable, and though, now and again, on his visits to the North he made studies for such pictures as *The Penny Wedding*, he cannot be said to have delineated Scottish life

in the way some later painters have done. In Wilkie's time, indeed, what is now known in literature as "local colour" was hardly thought of. In so far as Scotland is concerned, the sense of it was only being awakened by the character creations of the Waverley Novels. In Nicol Jarvie, Dominie Sampson, the Deans household, and the innumerable company of lawyers, tradesmen and country lairds, the nation realised its own qualities or peculiarities, and it was mainly in this way that Scott influenced Harvey. For, though his Covenanting pictures recall some chapters in "Old Mortality," the painter's view differed widely from the author's. Amongst those sufferers for conscience' sake the artist finds no place for Balfour or Mucklewrath, much less for Mause or Cuddie. But in his pictures of contemporary Scottish life Harvey also illustrates a society discovered by the novelist.

In speaking of Harvey's works one must judge to a considerable extent from the engravings, for many of them, through the injudicious use of bitumen, have perished or become the wrecks of their former selves. Fortunately a sufficient number, those of his later years especially, are in good preservation. The Covenanting and Disruption pictures appeared at intervals from the *Preaching* of 1829–30 till the *Sabbath in the Glen*, painted about thirty years later. Such works as *Bunyan imagining his Pilgrim's Progress*, *Bunyan selling tag-laces at the door of Bedford Jail*, and *Reading the Bible in the Crypt of St. Paul's*, are kindred with them, being inspired by the same spirit. Harvey had little training; from the first indeed one feels the ardour of a contemplative and imaginative spirit struggling with a limited technical knowledge, gradually gathering strength and painfully evolving methods to

express its conceptions. The *Communion* of 1840 is very far in advance of the *Preaching* and *Baptism* of ten years earlier date, and in some of his later pictures a yet farther advance is discernible. In the first two the grouping is crowded, the lighting artificial, and the breadth of the masses is injured by over insistence on a multitudinous detail. These are defects natural to a very young painter in treating subjects of great complexity. *Drumclog*, which stands midway between the *Baptism* and the *Communion*, has disturbing elements in its composition. The hurly-burly of the central onslaught is depicted with a spirit and gusto which the groups to right and left are very far from sustaining. In the *Communion*, on the contrary, all is homogeneous. The congregation seated about the grassy slopes of this lone nook amongst the hills, both by their devotional expression and attitudes and by the artistic management of the masses in which they are disposed, lead up to the central solemnity where the minister blesses the cup before passing it to the elders. He is young, though not in his first youth, the swarthy, dark-haired silhouette he presents to us, the dilated eye, and his impassioned yet restrained gesture, bespeak the ardour of a Renwick or a Cameron. Over against him stand three elders, each of unmistakable Scottish type, ready to receive the sacred symbol. A fourth passes silently behind the worshippers bearing the Holy Bread. The impressiveness of the scene is intensified by the shadowed waste of hillside which seems to enfold the little company, and to make more vivid by its contrasted gloom the central white of the Communion-table. In 1840 it is evident Harvey has found his *métier*.

In the same vein are the two pictures of later date dealing

with the events of the Disruption period, *Quitting the Manse*, 1847–8, and *Sabbath in the Glen*, 1858–9. The former of these, so well known through the engraving, has unfortunately perished ; the latter is in excellent condition. Both belong to that most valuable category of historical painting which perpetuates for us events the artist has himself seen and possibly taken part in, and which stands related to what is called historical painting as the novel of contemporary life to romance. To speak only of *Sabbath in the Glen* one can note at a glance that, both in spirit and treatment, it is the very analogue of *The Communion*. Something of the austerity begotten of persecution has lifted from these worshippers of a happier time, and there is here no sense of an impending dragonade to give its hint of tragedy to the occasion. The benevolent features and commanding form of Thomas Guthrie bear no suggestion of the setter forth of extreme doctrines, as do those of the hunted hillman of the conventicle, but one feels that should occasion arise, he could call his well conditioned and intelligent hearers to resistance and give as good a stroke in the cause as did ever Hackston or Paton for the blue banner of the Covenant. The varied grouping of the numerous company, seated or recumbent on the heathery slope, shows a finer sense of composition and a more learned subordination of details to the masses than do the earlier pictures. The character of the heads of this typically Scottish audience, intent on the words of the preacher, are admirably depicted ; whilst in yet another aspect, the unity of the landscape and figure elements, Harvey is here at his best.

Education and the national pastimes have not escaped this keen observer of his countrymen. His first two

subject-pictures—*The Village School* and *Showing the Prize* —tell how early his attention had been directed to the nursery of so much that is best in Scottish life. The autocratic sway of the dominie is an indelible memory, kindly or otherwise, with country-bred Scotsmen of ante-schoolboard days; and such pictures as *The School Examination*, 1832, and *The Schule Skailin'*, 1846, call vividly to mind two of its happier aspects. In the former, a row of selected scholars, raised on a platform, are being put through their facings by the *maister* in presence of the minister and a mixed company of admiring parents and friends. The meantime unoccupied children on the foreground benches and in the shadowed recesses of an apartment which would shock a modern inspector, twist and wriggle and chatter, with the comfortable assurance that, for to-day at least, the *tawse* is a dead letter. In the later picture, now in the Scottish National Gallery, the children make for the open door with an alacrity which, according to Mr. Barrie, marks our Scottish manner of exit, not from school only, but from church. Two of the bigger boys, already outside and grinning with delight, endeavour to block the passage by closing the door. But the assault at Hougomont was a trifle to this, the pressure is irresistible, and the obstructionists may as well desist. Meantime the dominie, in long black coat and knee breeches something the worse for wear, turns from his desk near the window to examine the copy-book of a delinquent, who eyes him with appealing glance, nibbling at his quill the while. A younger red-headed urchin, with *carritch* in hand and tear-stained cheek, watches the exit with an air of resignation, whilst two girls at the other side of the room await, with school-bags ready, the release

of one or other of the unfortunates. This is a delightful specimen of Harvey's art from every point of view. The contrasted expressions of the elderly bewigged pedagogue and the boy whose copy he is examining, the one irritated yet patient, the other eager only for release, the wild struggle at the door, and the commiserating glance of the girl at the younger "kept in," whose doom seems fixed, whilst that of the other trembles in the balance; all are touches of nature showing a keenness of observation and rendered with a sureness of touch which the artist has never surpassed.

One can only mention *The Highland Funeral*, 1843–4, *Past and Present: Children blowing soap bells in Greyfriars Churchyard*, 1849; and *The Mountain Pool*, 1863. These and others awaken the reflective faculties by their various suggestions of joy or sorrow. Nor can the delineation of our national games, *The Curlers*, and *Village Bowlers* of 1835 and 1852 respectively, be dwelt on. The former has become a classic. The animation and excitement of the "roarin' game" have never been so depicted, and it has long been used as a frontispiece for their Annual by the Royal Caledonian Curling Club.

One other picture must not be so hastily dismissed, both on account of its own merits and because it marks the transition from figure to landscape painting. *Sheep Shearing** was exhibited in 1860. It is in such occupations, as old as the world's history, that one feels in a peculiar way how much man is a part of his surroundings; and never has the immemorial sentiment been better expressed than in Harvey's rendering of this event of the pastoral year. For "the clipping" is an

* In the possession of Thomas Barclay, Esq., Edinburgh.

THE SCHULE SKAILIN'

By Sir George Harvey, P.R.S.A.

In the National Gallery of Scotland

event. In the sheep-farming districts of the Highlands and the Borderland the shepherds from a wide radius attend at the different functions in turn. The work is hard, but amongst our "herds" at least, there is no "deterioration of physique," and it is carried through with a will. From early morning till dark of the long northern day, in some farm shed, or oftener by a drystone fank wall, the work goes merrily on to the clicking of shears, the bleating of assembled flocks and the *collieshangies* inevitable where each shepherd is accompanied by two or three dogs. Here the gathering is on a smaller scale. The men, stripped to the shirt, with one or two attendant women, are seated in the lee of the enclosure where the sheep are penned. An older shepherd, past the more strenuous work, applies the marking iron to the flank of the latest shorn, whilst a fresh victim is hauled struggling through the gate. In the immediate foreground one of the men sharpens his shears, and between him and the main group are the embers of a fire and a collie seated by the tarpots. Only the painter's life-long friend Dr. John Brown might have put in words the restfulness and peace of this upland idyll. Suffice it to say that the component parts of the landscape, the rounded plateau where the collie sits sentinel over the next contingent of the flock, the shadowed escarpment of bare hills beyond, the blue distance, the sky of banded cirri and the thin veil of smoke rising from the embers in the foreground, adjust themselves to the figure interest with the ease and inevitableness of Nature itself. There is little positive colour, the neutral tones of the draperies are accented only by the red cap of one of the herds, and here and there a touch of blue, whilst a silvery light pervades the scene.

Harvey's technique does not come easy to him. He was heavily handicapped by the inadequate training of his earlier years. Both in the defective drawing and in the laboured composition of the first three Covenanting subjects this can be felt. *The Curlers* escapes the latter part of the charge by a sort of inspiration, the former not altogether, for one or two of the principal figures, by a something of rigidity in pose and drawing, interfere with the full swing of the action. This defect is more marked in some of the subordinate groups of the *Drumclog*, where the figures seem to be in a kind of arrested movement. In the latter case this is largely due to over-insistence on detail, but to some extent also to want of suppleness in the drawing. The lack of breadth in the masses is due to the former cause, but both that and the rather artificial lighting of those early pictures are common to the figure-painting of the period, in which studio-lit figures were made to do duty in the open. It troubles Harvey more because, at an early age, most of his subject-pictures are complex in their composition and the scenes are enacted under *plein air* conditions. In those days the painting which goes by that name was still in the distant future. One or two had had a prevision of the theory of values, but even they had not thought of its application to crowded figure-subjects under the light of heaven. It says much for Harvey's powers of observation, that with no cut-and-dry theory to help him, in his later figure pictures he so closely approximated the *plein air* effect. In *Sabbath in the Glen*, for example, the studio effect on groups and individuals has given place to the more diffused lighting with which modern painting has familiarised us. As a bit of tone, indeed, few moderns

have excelled the setting of the figure of the preacher against the shadowed hill beyond.

As regards colour and handling Harvey is at his best in some of the pictures of his middle period which have survived the processes he then used. *The Schule Skailin'* is a fine example of the freer brushing and fuller quality he then attained. Even in the wreck of such works as *The Communion* one can feel the richer glow of the more complex methods he abandoned in his later figure-work, through fear of the consequences. Comparing the last-named picture with its replica at the Mound, or *The Schule Skailin'*, with *Sabbath in the Glen*, one feels that in the later pictures the fineness of surface, which has been spoken of as a merit in contemporary Scottish painting, has been pushed to excess, especially in the latter, which has the smoothness almost of lacquer work. Unlike Duncan, Harvey makes plentiful use of blue and the cooler neutrals which give lightsomeness to colour arrangements, but they are not always very happily related with the warmth of the flesh tones or the browns of the darker shadows. Though, when at his best, a most capable craftsman, Harvey's work touches us primarily on the emotional side, and through the interpretation he has given to so many aspects of Scottish life and sentiment.

Like Wilkie, Duncan and Harvey were native bred, and the Italian legend seemed dying a natural death. But all through the history of the craft, the spell of Southern Art has reasserted itself from time to time, and certain natures have been drawn to the old centre. During the second and third decades of the nineteenth century, and following hard on the movement initiated by Mengs and Winckelmann,

the northern tide again flowed strongly Romewards. Robert Scott Lauder was amongst those who felt its current irresistible. His countrymen David Scott and William Dyce were also of the number, but their motives differed widely from his. They were mainly interested in a revival of the grand style; Lauder's passion was colour. Neither of his fellow artists had much effect on subsequent Scottish painting. Lauder, on the other hand, from his influence on a younger generation and the peculiar way in which his art relates itself to the old and the new, is one of the most interesting personalities in the history of the school.

From the first his work shows a certain accomplishment. In a small portrait of himself as a lad of about nineteeen, there is nothing of crudity, or of the *gaucherie* often apparent at so early a stage in the works even of those who, later, have become good technicians. The boyish face looks over the shoulder, *à la* Raphael, the flesh is simply and broadly modelled, and, though there is not all the salience one could desire, the handling has that consonance with the structure of the head and sympathy with the varying consistencies of the surface which mark at once the colourist and the brushman. The same qualities can be seen in the small portraits of his friends W. L. Leitch and John Steell, of shortly later date. In various life-size family portraits painted about this time, and notably in half-lengths of his brothers James Eckford and Henry, young Lauder gradually attains to greater facility; whilst the qualities which distinguish him from his Scottish contemporaries—a preference for a fuller brush and a certain sumptuousness of colour—become more marked.

The influence of Scott on Robert Lauder began early,

for soon after his student years he was employed along with others in the illustration of an edition of the Waverley Novels. Thereafter, for more than a quarter of a century the picturesque themes with which they abound divided his best energies with subjects from the sacred narrative. Portraiture and landscape varied his production; but his reputation rests mainly on such works as *The Bride of Lammermoor*,* and *The Trial of Effie Deans*,† in the one direction, and *Christ teacheth Humility*,‡ and *Christ walking on the Sea*, in the other. The first named appeared at the Scottish Academy in 1831. The scene is that in which the Master of Ravenswood suddenly presents himself in the family gathering assembled to witness Lucy Ashton's espousals with Bucklaw, and the mingled tragedy and festivity of the occasion admirably suit the qualities Lauder had for some time been developing. The shadowed and richly furnished apartment, the agitated guests in rustling silks or military accoutrements, with the contrasted figures of the Master and the bride, give full scope both for the delight in costly stuffs, and for a certain gravity and dignity of arrangement which mark the artist's finest achievements. The intermediary combinations of colour and the chiaroscuro are so disposed as to lead, on the one hand, to the bravery of white satin and lace and pearls of the unfortunate Lucy, on the other to the cloaked and sable-plumed figure of her lover, thus subserving the dramatic interest of a story which has furnished a theme for three arts. In painting it could hardly be more impressively handled than in this early

* In the possession of the Earl of Ellesmere.

† At Hospitalfield, Arbroath.

‡ In the National Gallery of Scotland.

essay of Robert Lauder. "The Legend of Montrose" and "Peveril of the Peak" were also laid under contribution, but his work about this time was mainly portraiture.

In the autumn of 1833 he married a daughter of Thomson of Duddingston, and shortly after the young couple crossed the Alps and made Rome their headquarters for some years. It would be interesting to know how Rome and Italy and all that he had come so far to see impressed the Scottish painter. He could scarcely have found the contemporary art to his liking. Reference has been made to the quickened European tide that had been setting southwards for fifteen or twenty years, and of all the invasions of which Rome has been the object, none have been stranger than that led by the young German painters between 1810 and 1820, and which was still a living force at the date of Lauder's visit. A reaction from the classicism of the previous generation, the "cult of the Madonna," of which Overbeck, Cornelius, and Schnorr were the high priests, was equally an outcome of literary and philosophic theorising. What Lessing and Winckelmann were to the earlier, Wackenroder and Frederick Schlegel were to the later movement. Muther, in his fascinating narrative of this period, tells of the devotion with which "the Nazarenes," as they were nicknamed, pursued their new ideals, shunning "the paganism of St. Peter's" and marvelling at the old Christian monuments. We know that David Scott and Dyce had affinities with the new movement, but one of Lauder's temperament could have had little sympathy with either the art or the manner of life of the innovators. Their dinners "composed of a soup and a pudding, or some tasty vegetable, seasoned only by earnest conversation on art"; their rather self-

conscious worship of "the seraphic Fiesole," and their wanderings "at the twilight hour" on Monte Cavo, would hardly be to the liking of the somewhat dressy Scottish painter fresh from his tandem-driving on the Queensferry road. This phase of the Nazarene movement may indeed have been of earlier date, for most of them had returned to Germany before 1833; but "the young German Raphael" —Overbeck—remained, and the frescoes at the Villa Massini were still new. For the work of men who, on principle, abandoned the use of the model and painted their pictures from imagination in the seclusion of their cells "in order not to be too naturalistic," the painter of *The Bride of Lammermoor* and *The Trial of Effie Deans* could have had little liking. The probability is that he gave both Nazarenes and classicists a wide berth. More congenial company would not be wanting, many compatriots being in Rome about this time. His old master, Wilson, would give him a hearty welcome: Macdonald, Park and Lees were kindred spirits. Scott in one of his sickly humours calls on him shortly after his arrival and notes, with an implied touch of scorn, "find he has got a sitter's chair erected and is employed painting portraits." Poor David with his morbid broodings would scarcely prove lively company for the young couple, but others would be more sympathetic. With Gibson he was on terms of intimate friendship, and in William Simson, when he arrived a year or two later, he would have a man after his own heart. He had begun his *Effie Deans* before leaving Scotland, and taken it to Rome with him. On the occasion of one of Gibson's visits to his studio, Lauder, after showing him the various works on which he had been engaged, bethought him of the roll of canvas which,

it may be, he had forgotten amidst new surroundings. He unwound it for the inspection of his visitor, who, after a close examination, turned to the painter with the exclamation: "Go home and finish that, it will make your reputation." It was hardly work for Rome, where only the "sitter's chair" and the frequency with which it was occupied enabled him to prolong his residence, and through study of the great masters to confirm those tendencies which had drawn him southwards.

On returning to this country Lauder took up his residence in London, where he remained for twelve or thirteen years. Hardly had he settled down before he was at work on *The Trial of Effie Deans.* The picture appeared at the Scottish Academy in 1842. Though it has suffered somewhat from causes common to so many pictures of the period, its retains all its original impressiveness. The moment selected is that when, counsel for the defence having failed to elicit from the prisoner's sister the statement on which the hope of acquittal depended, her father falls senseless on the floor of the courthouse. The prostrate figure of Deans, and Jeanie, who bends over him with tender solicitude, with one or two others who lend assistance, occupy the left foreground, hard by the table where the advocates conduct the prosecution and defence. To the right the prisoner at the bar wildly strives with the guards between whom she is placed, whilst from foreground to the shadowed recesses of the apartment, the crowded benches of the auditorium rise behind her. An advocate exchanges words with the counsel who has been so unexpectedly baffled, others view compassionately the affecting scene. The judges grouped about the president whisper each other on the bench, the

THE TRIAL OF EFFIE DEANS

By Robert Scott Lauder, R.S.A.

In the collection at Hospitalfield

audience is in suppressed agitation. The bar-keepers and macers alone preserve the rigid composure of office.

In choosing for his subject one of Scott's master-scenes, Lauder set himself no light task. How often in such cases the one art fails adequately to realise the other, how often such translation only disturbs and confuses the mental vision! Here it is otherwise; the artist has so identified himself with the word-painter that the scene is visualised, and even supplemented in those directions proper to the art of the former. Turning to its technical aspects, it can be seen at a glance that the composition is highly original. The picture is cut in half by the dark-robed figures of the two leading counsel, and it is only by the skilful use of the pervading atmosphere, and the wildly stretched arm and appealing gesture of the prisoner on the right to the judges on the left, that the breadth and dramatic unity of the whole are preserved. Thus, what might have been a fatal element is not only obviated, but skilfully made use of by the artist to give restfulness and stability to an arrangement otherwise too agitated for the dramatic intensity of the occasion. One can find here also those distinctive qualities and tendencies to which reference has been made, and which his residence in Italy had confirmed and deepened. A veiled sunlight which enters by a high window beyond the bar suffuses the apartment, and its incidence on the varied uniforms and dresses, and on the picturesque adjuncts of the law, assists admirably the painter's predilections. This softened light falls on the yellow front of the bench, on the ermine and red of its occupants, and illumines more keenly the contours and costume of the foreground group. It adds a richer gold to the yellow coat and a glow to the features of the

brown-haired young man who leans forward on the chair above Jeanie, while the pink coat of him who kneels beside her takes on a woof of amber. The girl's naked shoulders catch the warm light, which glints on faces, wigs, and parchments of the advocates about the table, and is repeated, with lessened force, on Effie's face and figure, as on those in the crowded benches behind her. To this arrangement of sombre shadow and mellow lights, the negative notes are furnished by the cooler shadows of wig and ermine, and by the varied shades of blue in the uniforms of the officials and the shawl on the chair in the foreground.

Unlike some of his countrymen who have gone South, Lauder, all through his London residence, continued to support strongly the exhibitions of the Scottish Academy, and his interest in the North was further kept alive by a succession of subjects from the "Waverley Novels." "Guy Mannering," "Ivanhoe," "Old Mortality," "Quentin Durward," and "The Fair Maid of Perth" were laid under contribution. The last-named seems to have had a special attraction, furnishing no fewer than four subjects between 1842 and 1854. One—*The Glee Maiden*—is well known through the engraving issued by the Association for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Scotland. *The Fair Maid and Louise listening at the Dungeon Wall*, in which the contrasted fair and dark types of the glover's daughter and the Glee Maiden have supplied the motive, has also been reproduced.

The Scriptural subjects begin with the *Ruth* of 1843. It was followed two years later by *Hannah presenting Samuel to Eli*, and during the artist's subsequent career the Gospel narrative increasingly attracts him. Subjects

from prose and poetic literature—Burns, Byron and Tennyson in the latter—continue, but his mind is more filled with the realisation of the graver ideals embodied in *Christ walking on the Sea*, 1850, *The Crucifixion*, 1853, and on the two versions of *Christ teacheth Humility*, the larger and better of which is now in the Scottish National Gallery. It was exhibited in 1848. The impressive scene is imagined on the old lines, though there is something of the true costume of the East mingled with the conventional draperies of the older masters. Under a somewhat lurid evening sky our Lord and His hearers are assembled on the steps of a gateway of some Judean city, its huge buttressed walls forming a sombre background for the mixed multitude. Various shades of reverence, surprise, curiosity, and ill-concealed enmity, mark the spirit in which the divine teaching, with its symbol of the child set in the midst, is received by His disciples, the common people, and the emissaries of the Sanhedrim. Technically, the picture combines much that is best and most attractive in Lauder's work. The sober harmonies which always distinguish it are here accented by broader and fuller notes of positive colour. The red of Christ's robe and the scarlet cap of a boy seated in the foreground gather up the various shades of crimson and rose in the draperies; the warm whites and buffs of lighter fabric and heavy burnous, and the gold and russet of sky and background, culminate in the yellow sleeve of the disciple who rests his hand on the marble balustrade, whilst the blue of the Master's outer garment concentrates the cooler tones scattered through the composition. These combinations reveal everywhere an individual note in Lauder's use of colour—interminglings and transitions, delicate echoes of the more

dominant tones—which, like subtle chords in music, make a peculiar appeal to the æsthetic sense. The painting is thinner than in the *Effie Deans* and some pictures of the Roman period, and this, on so large a scale, tends to flatness. But the want of relief, though accented by the less nourished material, is mainly due to a tendency to etherealise, as one might say, the divine and more spiritual types in such themes; for in dissociating them from the earthly and sensuous the artist often overshoots the mark. One desiderates a fuller humanity in Lauder's conceptions of Christ, and less of the spiritual in his renderings of the more ardent worshippers. In some of the artist's other pictures one is even more conscious of this. Here, a certain dignity of aspect mitigates, but does not altogether atone for, a want of relief in the body and of animation in the features of the central figure. Again, the white-robed woman at His feet, who listens so eagerly, is a creature of spirit, a beautiful idea, statuesque in pose and of almost statuesque pallor, but too obviously contrasted with the men of flesh and blood around her, and especially with the dark and sinister figure of Judas close by. The auburn-haired girl in the shadow is more happily imagined, as is the younger child towards the left, whose innocent expression is in such striking contrast with that of the old man by her side.

At the exhibitions of 1850 and the three following years Lauder was represented by various important Scriptural works, *Christ walking on the Sea*,* *Christ denied by Peter*—a subject to which he returned seven years later†—*Christ appearing to the Disciples on the way to*

* In the possession of the Baroness Burdett-Coutts.

† One of these is in the possession of A. Smith, Esq., Edinburgh.

Emmaus,* and *The Crucifixion*.† The last named, in which the cross and body of Christ only appear, is a striking version of the often painted theme. From the drooping head downwards the figure of our Lord is covered by the loose folds of a winding-sheet, which shows weirdly against the darkened sky. The effect, as with other versions where some unexpected, but quite appropriate, trait has been added, is solemnising. The Velasquez at the Prado, where the heavy tress of dark hair has fallen on the shoulder, is an instance.

After 1857, landscape and slighter figure-themes of poetry and legend become more prominent, but soon failing health in the form of paralysis arrested the busy hand of the painter, and though for some years he continued to exhibit, his contributions were almost entirely of sketches and studies made in connection with earlier work.

The aims and characteristics of Lauder's art have been indicated in the course of the foregoing remarks. Like that of most Scottish painters it suffers from the lack of a thorough training. The opportunities for study in Edinburgh were extremely limited, and his five years with Andrew Wilson at the Trustees' Academy, during his teens, would forward him little. And, though he spent some time subsequently drawing from the Antique at the British Museum, and from the Life at a private art school, he had little more systematic training in the all-important knowledge of form than Duncan, Harvey, and Bonnar, all of whose works exhibit more or less slackness in that direction. This defect, not easily remedied after a certain time

* In the Albert Institute, Dundee.

† In the Roman Catholic Church, Ravelston.

of life, especially with those in whom the colour instinct is strong, undoubtedly prevented Lauder from reaping the full benefit of his five years in Italy. The nobler and graver sense of design added to his work thereby, often seems only to accent the looseness of drawing, and certain stiffnesses and rigidities, which mar his compositions. In *Hal o' the Wynd and the Glee Maiden*,* for instance, where the two hurry along by the cloister wall, there is the same feeling of arrested action as in some of Harvey's groups. Neither limbs nor drapery have the easy flow of line which suggests swiftness. But, in his example of a more dignified design, and in his use of those sober and harmonious colour arrangements which suit best the expression of graver subjects, Lauder did a great service to Scottish Art. For though the former often lacked the suppleness which adds the ultimate grace, it was never trivial, nor, though he was a most capable craftsman, can it ever be said of his technique, as of that of some expert masters of the brush, that manual dexterity is its main characteristic. Sir Walter Armstrong in his "Scottish Painters" finds a strong resemblance in Lauder's work to that of Eugène Delacroix, and though most of his compositions are deficient in that sense of motion and tumult which is so special a characteristic of the great romanticist, the analogy holds good in respect of a marked similarity in their treatment of colour. Nay, some of his sketches and unfinished studies—like the small *Slaughter of the Innocents*†—show much of the fire and vivacity of the *Massacre at Scio* in the Louvre.

It is doubtful if the Scriptural subjects which occupied

* At Hospitalfield, Arbroath.

† In the possession of Mrs. Lauder Thomson, Edinburgh.

so large a proportion of his later career add to the artist's reputation. In spite of the many fine and painter-like qualities in which they abound, a certain constraint incident to the treatment of such themes in modern art, seems to hamper his brush. His qualities are seen to better advantage in his renderings of the more tragic incidents from the "Waverley Novels," the lighter subjects from poetry and legend—*Burns and Captain Grose*, and *Feckless Fanny*, may be instanced—in some pensive Scottish and Roman landscapes, and, as is the case with most artists, in such studies done at odd times as *A Vine at Genzano** and *A Roman Studio.** These two small canvases show that though his Roman period was unproductive in pictures, Lauder was all the time acquiring the qualities which made him the painter and the influence he became in later years. Both show how the painter's faculty can lift any subject into the higher regions of art. That little vine, with twisted fibrous boughs and burden of ripe fruit basking in the mellow sunlight, is eloquent of all the poets have written on the inexhaustible theme; the story of Silenus and Bacchus lies hidden in its indented leaves and juicy bunches. The *Studio* suggests no such fancies, but its classic torso, costly properties, and the glow of its sombre recesses where piled-up canvases, studies and sketches gradually reveal themselves to the eye, embody, as fully as his best pictures, that sensuous element without which the painter's art is shorn of its special glory.

In 1852 Lauder returned to Edinburgh on his appointment to the mastership of the Trustees' Academy, and, for nine years thereafter, he superintended the Life and Antique departments. No more fortunate choice was ever

* In the possession of John Hutchison, Esq., R.S.A., Edinburgh.

made, for, by a certain enthusiasm and the charm of a unique personality, more than by direct teaching, he influenced Scottish Art in a way no individual painter before or since has done. His reverence for traditional art, both in its spirit and methods, was inherited by most of his pupils, and though he was opposed to the extreme developments of the contemporary realistic movement south of the Tweed, he was not blind, as his own practice shows, to the necessity of each succeeding age adding some new element to the art of the past. So that the naturalism of the distinguished artists trained under Lauder—and none of them escaped the trend of the times—was never a violent rupture with the past, as it was in England, but a something added to and absorbed into the body of orthodoxy, as one might say. Most of his pupils are colourists, yet none of them even in this show any marked resemblance to their master, whose influence tended rather to help the faculty of each along its individual line, than to assimilate them to himself: surely the true function of a teacher.

CHAPTER XII

DAVID SCOTT AND WILLIAM DYCE

So far the stream of Scottish painting has flowed in a restricted channel. Portraiture, *genre* painting, subjects from history or historical romance, have been the theme of figure-painters north of the Tweed. And the latter department has been treated by Allan, Harvey, and Duncan rather in the narrative manner than with any intention of pointing a lesson which all might read from the records of the past. Not only so, their compositions want that largeness of design which gives dignity and impressiveness, and they would fail of their aim if used for decorative purposes in connection with national or municipal buildings, where such subjects find their most appropriate home. In another sphere, the Raeburn tradition had imparted a certain breadth and simplicity of design to the work of his successors, which was in danger of being lost sight of by their contemporaries in the more ambitious and complex departments of figure-painting. Lauder, as we have seen, felt the necessity of some larger element, and the two painters with whom we have now to deal shared his feeling. Though younger men, Scott and Dyce had already turned to the same source for deliverance from what they must have considered the trivial tendencies of the native school. Lauder, recognising the importance

of the sensuous element in painting, sought this through a higher conception of colour-arrangement, his two brother artists by an appeal to the intellect through symbolism and a larger design. Etty's work, so highly prized amongst Scottish artists about this time, would affect them differently, but all in the direction of a larger treatment.

Able men as Scott and Dyce were, they failed to leave any marked impress on the native school, and the story of their doings and aspirations stands apart from the main current of Scottish painting. Under happier circumstances it might have been otherwise, but the sharp contrast they make with their contemporaries renders them all the more interesting. The son of an engraver, David Scott was early in touch with art, but that advantage was more than counterbalanced by the austerity which a series of family afflictions had imparted to the household; and when with opening manhood dreams of art came to him, "the pale cast of thought" which never left him was already quite pronounced. "In his nineteenth year," we read, "his thoughts were much bent on religious matters," and his scrap-book shows the nature of his reflections:

> . . . . can this be? Yes! I feel
> Death clasp me round like a great hand of steel

are the closing lines of a stanza from this source quoted in his brother's memoir.* A little later we read of his reciting an "Ode to Death" "full of great words and involutions," which "made a due impression and was considered very fine." About this time—1827—he shakes himself free of the paternal profession as "a thing not to

* "Memoir of David Scott, R.S.A.," by W. B. Scott. Edinburgh 1850.

be borne," and, perhaps to symbolise the occasion, begins a picture of *Lot fleeing from the Cities of the Plain*, on the scale of life.

His first exhibited works are mostly in accordance with a youth so nourished. *The Hopes of Early Genius dispelled by Death*, 1828, was followed next year by *The Last of Ossian*. Works of a more joyous and strenuous nature alternate with *The dead Sarpedon borne by Sleep and Death*,* *Cain*,† and *Russians burying the Dead*.‡ The subjects of the former are mostly from Greek mythology, or have in them a strain of allegory, like *Nimrod the Mighty Hunter*, and the sketch of *Wallace defending Scotland*—afterwards developed on a larger scale. Those earliest works already show Scott's qualities and limitations. At a time when most painters are concerned only with the rudiments of the craft, Scott has, unhappily for himself, come to the conclusion that technical qualities are of secondary importance. His creed once formed, he adheres to it with a kind of obstinacy characteristic of the man; though there are not wanting indications in the notes and sayings of his later life, that he had misgivings on the point which it took him some trouble to suppress. The technique of the Venetians, when he first encountered it in its worthier manifestations at the Louvre and in Venice itself, calls forth his admiration, and there is a false ring about the sentence with which he winds up his very interesting analysis of the school: "But oh! what is to be seen here to fulfil what painting ought to and can perform? Nothing. Titian is an old man without imagination

* In the possession of Mrs. Samuel Brown, Edinburgh.

† In the National Gallery of Scotland.

‡ In the possession of Miss Carfrae, Edinburgh.

in all his works; Tintoretto a blind Polyphemus, Veronese a doge's page"; as if he felt it necessary to curb his admiration to fit a preconceived theory.

Such a mental outlook made Scott impatient of training, and his contempt for portraiture deprived him of that discipline of hand and eye invaluable to many of his contemporaries; so that it is not surprising to find his work characterised by an inadequacy of technique which goes far to neutralise the often grandly felt intention. In the *Nimrod*, for instance, along with a largeness of design befitting the symbolic treatment, there is a total lack of those finer curvatures of line and gradations of surface which would have given suppleness—in this case one may almost say coherence—to the contorted figure of the prototype of huntsmen. The *Sarpedon* and *Cain* are executed in a low key and in a monochromatic scheme. In the latter the herculean form of the first murderer rushes straight forward, his livid brow branded with strange imprints, and with hands pressed to his ears that he may escape the upbraidings of the group who point the finger at him as he flies. In the other the slain Lycian is "carried swiftly in state by the Twins Sleep and Death" to his native shore. The pallor of the dead warrior is finely contrasted with the brawny shoulder on which he rests, and with the muffled form who clasps him from above. The group, inclosed by the sable wings of the Sun God's envoys, and felt rather than distinctly seen, floats diagonally across the darkness. The scale of life on which these two works were executed was, of course, trying for one so meagrely equipped in the technique of his craft; but even in the smaller *Russians burying their Dead*, of the same year, the execution is uncouth and clumsy.

At the age of twenty-six he sets out for Rome, self-reliant in his ideas, and with little notion of the weak joints in his artistic armour. His Italian journal exhibits Scott in his relations to his calling, to his new surroundings, and to his ever restless and unsatisfied spirit. Several Scottish painters and sculptors happen to be in Rome at the same time, and their company saves him from overmuch brooding. His old master, Andrew Wilson, seems sorely perplexed at this strange product of the orthodox Trustees' Academy. "Criticises some parts of my picture; takes out his snuff-box, and asks if he has said enough." "A neatly done copy of Correggio would be the thing for him," is the comment of his quondam pupil. The names of Macdonald and Park, of Lees, McInnes, and Lauder, figure throughout the journal with those of Gibson, Wyatt, and Severn, from south of the Tweed. At the Café—the famous Greco—or at one or other of their studios, they discuss art or "talk wildly of religion, evil and good." On one occasion he even joins Park in singing the first psalm—Scotch precentor fashion—which recalls to him that he had last heard it in the manse of Kippen, with appropriate reflections.

But through it all, in broken health during the earlier months, he works indefatigably. The spring and summer of 1833 find Scott engaged on various characteristic subjects, *Time surprising Love**, *The Four Times of the Day*,* *Sappho and Anacreon**, and the *Vintager*.† Both as regards symbolic meaning and execution the first named is one of the most striking of the artist's works, and it shows better than words how much he has been affected by

* In the possession of Miss Carfrae, Edinburgh.

† In the National Gallery of Scotland.

Venetian methods. The gaunt figure of the Destroyer, his bald head bound with a dark fillet, is seen in profile, seated on a red mat spread across the foreground of a Giorgione-like landscape. With hands folded about his knees, he regards grimly a rosy-winged Cupid, who, with spent shafts and silken bow-string snapped, realises with horror that he is within the sweep of the great scythe, the blade of which for a moment lies inactive on the sward. Beyond, a youth in ruddy garment leaves a disconsolate maiden. Both in design and colour the work differs diametrically from the monotonic treatment of *Cain* and *Sarpedon*. In *Four Times of the Day* the artist has sought to embody and symbolise in human form the feeling engendered by certain natural conditions. It is a vein in which he is peculiarly happy. *Evening*, with feet set close and seen against a darkling twilight, is borne on the back of a great moth. The figure stoops earthwards, drawing a soft veil around head and shoulders as he comes, and almost brushing the petals and leafage of a rose-bush silhouetted against the fading light, whilst the evening star grows brighter in the sky above. *Night*, floating athwart a blue grey firmament spotted with stars and with lower limbs seen against a crescent moon, is equally successful. *A Vintager*, and *Sappho and Anacreon*, are works of a less individual nature, in which he allows himself to deal with the purely pictorial and to illustrate more lightsome aspects of life. This he regards as a lapse from his true vocation, for we read in his journal of May 16, "Ashamed of my own prettiness in *Sappho*. Look back on my own pictures of *Remorse* and *Sarpedon* as more truly what I should do." He is uneasy when he departs from the colossal and the abstract.

At length, after nearly half a year in Rome, Scott settles to a work after his own heart. *Discord, or the Household Gods Destroyed*, is conceived on the scale which seems to be the painter's native element. Next to the *Vasco de Gama* it is his largest canvas, measuring nearly thirteen feet by ten and a half. In subject as in dimension the work was congenial, for it is intended to embody, through the media of the painter's art, the "eternal strife and tragedy of the progress of Humanity." One can form little idea of the picture from the ineffective engraving in his brother's memoir. Dr. Brown says "the whole canvas is as dark as necessity and fate could render it."* The plate gives a totally different idea, so that, without acquaintance with the original, it cannot be judged from a technical point of view. But, apart from that, the work is one which strains to the utmost his artistic theories. For this chaotic family strife of "some primæval epoch" is stripped, as far as possible, of that sensuous element which is the painter's proper sphere. Scott's best works, his theories notwithstanding, have their share of what he so little regarded both in colour and form; but it is difficult in this contorted and unrestful composition to find any æsthetic pleasure whatever.

For fifteen years after his return to Edinburgh, in failing health during the last few, Scott continued to develop his individual talent amidst many discouragements. History and allegory, Scripture, with the lighter creations of fancy and literature, furnish the themes. Of serious subjects, the *Traitor's Gate* and *Vasco de Gama*, of 1841 and 1842, best represent his mature talent; in the lighter vein *Puck fleeing before the Dawn* is the most successful. The

* Dr. Samuel Brown. "North British Review." May 1849.

first-named picture is at the Mound, having been presented to the nation some years ago by the late Mr. Robert Carfrae. Its title in the catalogue of the exhibition of 1842 was, *Thomas Duke of Gloucester, having been secretly carried off from England at the command of King Richard II., taken into Calais, where he was murdered.* It is one of the most impressive of the artist's works, and in it, more than in any other, he shows a painter-like mastery of his material. The short title, *The Traitor's Gate*, is perhaps the more suitable, giving the subject a wider significance. A boat with some half-dozen occupants glides under the narrow arch of a water-gate in the immediate foreground. The figures in the stern, the doomed man and his guard, are silhouetted against a luminous sky and moonlit sea, the free expanse of which contrasts with the gloom of the passage they are just entering. The boatmen have shipped their oars, there is a glimpse of a man in strenuous action at the portcullis chain, whilst a mysterious figure in the prow turns the edge of a broad axe towards the Duke, who eyes it steadily yet fearfully. The prisoner and his keepers, the latter stooping to avoid the toothed bar, still catch the moonbeams, whilst an artificial light illumines in varying degree the nearer figures, and the solid masonry and timber-work of the gloomy portal. On the sea-line a three-masted ship strikes against the lightening sky, on which a few stars are dimly visible. A sense of overmastering destiny and the weakness of the individual fills the mind when looking on this weird and original composition. Yet a moment, and this man of royal lineage, spirited away from courtly surroundings, and with the ducal coronet still on his brow, is shut out from the common heritage of humanity,

THE TRAITOR'S GATE
By David Scott, R.S.A.
IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF SCOTLAND

"clasped round"—to quote the artist's early note-book—"with a great hand of steel." Everything deepens the impression: the rigid attitude and ashen countenance of the victim, his guard with ready halberds, the rasp of the great chain as the boat shoots silently under the arch, the vaguely seen man with the axe, and the furtive sidelong glance of the boatman; all, action, attitude and gesture, contribute to the sense of impending tragedy. And here the technique is mostly of a high order. The painting of the naked limbs of the man who works the portcullis, and of the boatmen, is of a virility that leaves little to be desired, the modelling is at once easy and vigorous and the colour has a quality not often found in Scott's flesh painting. Unfortunately, in the faces of the Duke and his attendants, the old summary and somewhat archaic treatment has been adhered to. With this exception the work everywhere evinces a handling of paint which shows that Scott was by no means deficient in the qualities he so underrated. The composition is grand in its masses, and, alike in shadowed vault and calm radiance of sea and sky, there are the mystery and the glamour which only a capable craftsman can impart.

The *Vasco de Gama*,* though belonging to the same category, is weighted with a different moral. The inevitableness of Fate met by dignified submission is the lesson of the one; the heroic man a match for Fate, of the other. And the means are as different as the aim. In place of stealthy hurried movement and pervading silence, there is the turmoil consequent on the opposing forces of man and the elements. The subject, taken from Camöens' "Lusiad," represents the great navigator encountering the spirit of

* In the Trinity House, Leith.

the Cabo Tormentoso—since known as the Cape of Good Hope. The scene enacts itself on a ground of blackest night, and the crowd on the deck of the labouring vessel is rendered visible only by the lurid lightning which the spectre, looming vague and vast ahead, hurls at the presumptuous adventurers. Vasco, with feet well apart, and the cross of his sword-hilt clasped to his breast, faces the spirit with unflinching look. His raised right hand shades his eye from the blinding glare and secures his plumed cap against the storm. A doublet of dove-coloured silk and a wind-blown cloak of pale blue distinguish him from his more soberly attired companions, who crowd around him with varied action and expression. The deck, both nearer and beyond, swarms with the huddled forms of officers and crew, whose countenances express every shade of bewilderment, anger and panic. A yellow-haired young nobleman draws his sword and rushes to support his leader, a seminude sailor unsheaths a dagger behind his back, with very different intent, whilst a companion shakes his fist defiantly at the author of their calamities. One or two soldiers sustain their courage with cross and rosary; a terror-stricken priest shelters behind the mast. This heterogeneous mass of humanity, made visible for a moment in the lightning flash, expresses the various mental attitudes —from resolute faith to limp cowardice—in which man confronts the supernatural. It was the artist's supreme effort, and fortunately, like the work of the previous year, its technical merits sustain its high moral purpose. The variety of colour and vivacity of handling accord with the tumultuous and turbulent nature of the scene; and though the drawing and proportions of so many figures in contorted attitudes and violent action are far from

satisfactory, these weaknesses are to some extent veiled by a distribution of light and shadow which subserves the æsthetic as well as the narrative purposes of the picture. For the light, like the arrangement of the figures, is concentrical; it flames on the gay vestments of the hero and his immediate attendants, whence the tone is gradually lowered till the reds, blues and buffs of the ill-drawn subsidiary figures are swallowed up in the surrounding darkness.

The triptych of the following year, *Wallace, the Defender of Scotland*,* though lacking the grandeur of the larger works, is a fine conception, combining richness of colour with a dexterity of touch in detail seldom reached by the artist. In *Puck fleeing from the Dawn*, Scott touches the high water mark of such flights of fancy. Judged by Le Conte's engraving it seems a perfect embodiment of a subject one would have thought too intangible for material treatment. This chubby figure with great moth's wings and hands clasped about his knees, with the swift flight of Titania and her faëry train across the quickening dawn, interprets as no one else has done, one of Shakespeare's most charming conceptions. The broad terrace and dark sea-line, broken by marble statue and sable fir, add that touch of the concrete necessary to bring the theme within the domain of the painter's craft. *The Belated Peasant*,* where faëry elves and goblins of "pygmean race"—pale on the amber sky or dark against the yellow disc of the rising moon—"hold midnight revels by a forest side," shows how responsive was Scott's nature in this department, and how even "such stuff as dreams are made of," took form and shape under his sympathetic hand.

* In the possession of Miss Carfrae, Edinburgh.

Scott's art was many-sided, and a high place in it has always been allowed to his designs and illustrative work in black and white. These furnish a more suitable vehicle for forms of art addressed to the intellect, and get rid of the sensuous element inseparable from colour. The artist's connection with engraving early led him to express himself thus; and from the *Monograms of Man*, a series of six copper-plates in delicate outline, issued in 1831, to the *Eighteen Astronomical Designs* drawn the year before his death, Scott returned to the medium at frequent intervals. The best known are the twenty-five *Illustrations to the "Ancient Mariner"* published in 1837, and the *Forty Designs to the "Pilgrim's Progress"* of 1841. In all of them, though the earlier series—some of those to Coleridge's poem especially—show defective drawing, the individuality of the man is strongly felt, whilst some of the plates entitle their author to rank with the foremost of those who have expressed themselves in this the most abstract form open to the artist. Various of the *Astronomical Designs*—on which he was still engaged at the time of his death—notably *The Comet* and *The Footprint of the Omnipotent*—are amongst the grandest examples of Scott's imaginative power.

Though Dyce has been bracketed with Scott as indicating a revolt from the aims and methods of Scottish figure-painting, their careers had little else in common. Throughout his professional life Scott never swerved from the ideal with which he set out, and his technique, though enriched on the colour side, retains the same characteristic from beginning to end of an instrument inadequate for the full expression of his thought. Dyce, on the other hand, masters his craft with seeming ease, and after a few

tentative efforts in figure-painting, of a Scriptural or classic aim mostly, settles down to the career of a portrait-painter in Edinburgh. Everything pointed to a brilliant future for the painter of *Harriet Maconochie* and *The Painter's Son*, when his course was suddenly checked by his connection with the Government Schools of Design. Ten years are practically lost to his art, and when he again turns to his easel, he finds himself so rusty in the use of the brush that, along with the veteran William Etty, he returns to Mr. Taylor's Life school in St. Martin's Lane. But neither this exemplary course, nor the asssociation with the great English brushman can bring back the William Dyce of former days. New ideas are in the air; his repeated visits to the Continent have brought back the old passion for devotional and legendary art, and from henceforth his technique shows a curious combination of that of the Primitives and the English Pre-Raphaelites. These later years were so much occupied with a series of frescoes in the House of Lords, at Buckingham Palace, and at Osborne, that his easel pictures were comparatively few, and he died at the age of fifty-eight without having done full justice to his powers in any one direction. But in several he left unmistakable evidence of a rare and versatile talent which was not confined to the painter's art.

Taking the degree of M.A. at Marischal College, Aberdeen, at the age of sixteen, Dyce was destined for a professional career; but the boy had already determined otherwise, and in 1825, after some preliminary study in Edinburgh and London, he visits Rome, where he remains nine months, fascinated by the work of Titian and Nicolas Poussin. In 1827 he is in Rome again developing Pre-Raphaelite tendencies and evoking the admiration of

Overbeck and his German followers with a *Madonna and Child*, an admiration carried to the point of subscribing a considerable sum to purchase it and thus to enable the artist to remain in Rome, as they attributed his determination to leave to pecuniary causes. This was not the case, and the young artist returned to his native city forthwith, carrying with him, it may be presumed, the picture which had so attracted the Nazarenes. But such art was not in demand in the granite city, and the painter, chagrined at his want of success, threw aside his brushes and turned to the pursuit of science. This he did to so much purpose that his Alma Mater awarded him the Blackwell prize for an essay on electro-magnetism. He was only some twenty-three years of age, and the nature of his future career seemed to lie in the balance when, drawn, no doubt, by some rumour of the art movements there, Dyce came south to Edinburgh. During the eight years he spent in the Scottish capital his art runs the normal course, *i.e.*, an increasing practice in portraiture varied by subject-pictures at ever longer intervals. At first portraits are scarce, but from 1833 onwards they take the lead, and the Aberdonian seems in a fair way of sharing with Watson Gordon, Graham Gilbert, and one or two others, the heritage of Raeburn.

He certainly makes his *début*—if one may judge from the one or two pictures available for the comparison—in a manner to rouse great expectations. *The Infant Hercules*, now in the Scottish National Gallery, is a surprising work for one so young. The well-knit figure of this stalwart of the cradle, just awakened to the consciousness of his power, with a deadly enemy in either fist, fills the canvas in a manner satisfying to the eye, both as

regards linear design and arrangement of colour. The healthy sun-browned flesh, the draperies of creamy white and deep crimson, with the Titianesque sky, show at once the source of the inspiration and the ability of the pupil. The body is well modelled and, though suggestive of a vivacious brushwork, it has the more equal surface which distinguishes Italian from Flemish methods. The exhibition of 1833 contained portraits of *Lord Meadowbank* * and his youngest daughter *Harriet Maconochie*.* The former is a three-quarter length and full front presentment of a senator of the Scots College of Justice in those official robes which have undergone little change during two centuries, and to which native portraitists have been so much beholden for the setting, at once pictorial and dignified, of many of their most characteristic subjects. Here, a handsome man rather past the prime of life is set against the conventional sky and curtained pillars. The character is well rendered, the colour-masses nicely arranged and balanced, but there is a certain crudity and hardness due to the artist's having left out of count the harmonising effect of atmosphere. Little Harriet's portrait is a masterpiece. Some special inspiration has surely guided the hand of the artist in this delineation of childhood, worthy almost of a place beside *The Age of Innocence* or *Penelope Boothby*. A girl of five or six, seated on the ground, with knees drawn up and clasped hands resting on her lap, is seen full face. The blue-grey eyes hold the spectator with their half amused, half serious regard, the large pupils and the shadowy folds of brown hair causing them to tell dark on a rather pale complexion. The lower features have a dimpled softness, and the Cupid's bow mouth has a

* In the collection of J. L. Maconochie Welwood, Esq.

touch of light on the lower lip. Over a white frock she wears a ruddy striped pinafore; and a sky of neutral blue with glints of light low down, forms the background. The formality of the pose is saved by its ingenuous quaintness, and in the technique the artist has forgotten Italy and Venice, and thought only of the most direct means of expressing what was before him. This he does with a simplicity and mastery of his material which make one regret that this, his true vocation, was so soon to be abandoned for the uncongenial labours of a Government official, and the more artificial products of his later years. The flesh is softly and sweetly modelled without much impasto, and its thinner shadows—where the twill of the canvas shows quite distinctly—gives it more affinity with contemporary Scottish work than could have been expected from the painter of *The Infant Hercules* of three years earlier date, and *Francesca da Rimini*, exhibited in 1837. In the setting, too, he adopts the low-toned conventional sky of his brother painters rather than the Venetian blue and white of the earlier work.

A fitting companion to *Harriet Maconochie* is Dyce's portrait of his son. Speaking from memory, this *Portrait of the Artist's Son* is of a more golden tone and is painted with a fuller brush than the other, but the fair-haired, dark-eyed boy has something of the same formality of pose and *naïveté* of expression. *Mrs. Cockburn* *—the wife of Lord Cockburn—and *Sir G. Lowry Cole* † may be taken as representing the painter's male and female portraiture of about this date. The former in dark dress, Indian

* In the possession of John Cockburn, Esq.

† In the National Portrait Gallery.

MISS HARRIET MACONOCHIE

By William Dyce, R.A., *H.R.S.A.*

THE PROPERTY OF J. A. MACONOCHIE WELWOOD, ESQ.

shawl and turban of deep red, is more modern—less brown in the shadows—than most contemporary work. In some respects it is more akin to Duncan than Watson Gordon. The three-quarter length of the military officer, in its narrower shadows, broad half-tones, and finely rendered character, is more reminiscent of the latter. In the *Francesca da Rimini* of 1837, Dyce reverts to Italy and the oft-repeated theme from Dante, with doubtful results. In spite of a certain simplicity of design and the hint of tragedy the picture leaves one unmoved.

After 1837 William Dyce's name is rarely found in the Scottish Academy catalogues. Indeed, from causes already alluded to, the palette and brushes had almost to be laid aside for many years, during which his best energies were devoted to the thankless task of the establishment of Government Schools of Design, first in London and then throughout the provinces. Time and again Dyce resigned his position in despair at the red tape of Government methods, only to be called in again to clear up the deadlock into which things tended to drift; and when at last he got rid of the matter some time after 1850, the early formulas no longer fitted his new ideas. His position as Director of the Schools of Design, and his study of similar institutions abroad, had perhaps brought him in contact with some of those who had subscribed to purchase his *Madonna and Child*, and who had since been busy decorating with frescoes the public buildings of various German cities. The completion of the new Houses of Parliament and their mural adornment had been long discussed, and when a decision was come to, Dyce was intrusted with an important share in the carrying out of the scheme.

In this fresco work Dyce was fairly launched on a career which allowed full play for his early predilections. To popularise art in the North and to make it once more an important factor in national life, by means of the mural decoration of churches and public buildings, was the dream of the men with whom he had associated during his early visits to Rome. And for fifteen years past they had not lacked opportunity. They had been let loose, so to speak, on the churches and municipal institutions of the Fatherland. Overbeck—though he remained in Rome—Veit, Führich and Steinle found various fields for their activities; but it was especially in Munich that the princely munificence of Ludwig I. gave opportunity for the working out of the experiment on a great scale. After erecting palatial buildings which changed the appearance of the city, he had intrusted their decoration to Cornelius, saying to him, "You are my Field-Marshal, do you provide Generals of Division." And for many years, with the help of Kaulbach and Schnorr, that painter had been doing his best to realise Schiller's idea of educating humanity through æsthetics. Their labours were quite recent when the determination to decorate the new Houses of Parliament was come to, and it is known * that the series of frescoes from the Arthurian legend, executed by Dyce for the King's robing-room in the House of Lords, was suggested by Schnorr's illustrations of the *Nibelungen* in the Royal Palace at Munich.

Dyce's undertaking was never completed, but the five or six panels he painted have fared better than the German frescoes, most of which, according to Muther, are fast falling into a state of ruin. The subjects, taken from the

* Dafforne. *Art Journal*, October 1855.

story of Arthur, are illustrative of Religion, and of the virtues of Courtesy, Generosity, Hospitality, and Mercy. *Religion* represents the *Vision of Sir Galahad and his Company*, where knights, churchmen and ladies worship the throned figure of Christ, supported on either side by saints and symbolic animals borne on clouds. A shield and battle-axe lie in front of the altar steps, thus signifying the dedication of weapons of offence and defence to the service of religion. This large panel is flanked by two smaller upright pictures, *Generosity* on the right and *Courtesy* on the left. The former shows *King Arthur unhorsed and spared by Lancelot*, the latter *Sir Tristram harping to La Beale Isoude*. The wall facing the windows has for centrepiece *Hospitality*, a large oblong composition, *Admission of Sir Tristram to the fellowship of the Round Table*, in which the knight bows under the sword of Arthur, who, attended by warriors, harpers, and singers, occupies a raised daïs on the right. Behind and beyond Sir Tristram is seen a mixed company of ladies and knights on horseback with squires and attendants. The scene takes place in a great hall with arched windows and tesselated pavement. A smaller panel to the right, *Mercy, Sir Gawaine swearing to be merciful and never to be against the Ladies*, represents the warrior undergoing a process of coercion at the hands of five amazons, one of whom has possessed herself of his sword. *The Baptism of King Ethelbert*, in the Peers' Chamber, was painted in 1846. It was the first of the frescoes executed, and that which determined the going on with the scheme, but, from the position it occupies, it is difficult to get much idea of either arrangement or colour. The decoration at All Saints' Church, Margaret Street, London, and the windows at

Ely and Alnwick, are known to the writer only through cartoons and engravings.

Meanwhile his easel pictures were few and far between. In 1844 he was represented at the Royal Academy by *King Joash shooting the Arrow of Deliverance*,* a simple and telling composition, in which the shaft of the kneeling king, drawn to the tip, seems urged on its course by the outstretched arms of the prophet seated behind him. In 1850 there appeared *Jacob and Rachel*,† which subject he repeated several times with modifications. From this date onward, having got rid of his connection with the Government Schools, his appearances at the Royal Academy are more frequent. In these later pictures his technique is affected by the English Pre-Raphaelites. He adds to his former severity of design and the something of asceticism which linked him with the earlier German movement, an elaboration of detail equal to that of any of the famous brotherhood, then a growing power in native art. In such works as *Titian making his first essay in colour*, *St. John and his Adopted Mother*,‡ and *George Herbert at Bemerton*,§ the excessive elaboration of the setting weakens the design, whilst the *Pegwell Bay*,§ though said to have been painted from memory with the aid of a pencil drawing, is suggestive of photography both in landscape and figures. The figure-pictures differ; the former being full of positive colour, whilst the latter is in a scheme of grey-greens on a light sky, emphasised by the dark-robed figure of the poet-priest. The *St. John*, though not exhibited till 1860, had been painted in 1844, and taken up

* Engraved in Dafforne's article in *Art Journal*, October 1855.
† Engraved in series of royal pictures, *Art Journal*, 1860.
‡ In the Tate Gallery. § At the Guildhall.

ST. JOHN LEADING THE BLESSED VIRGIN FROM THE TOMB

By William Dyce, R.A., *H*.R.S.A.

IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF BRITISH ART

again and worked on seven years later. The probability is that its fuller colour and more searching detail belong to the year of revision, when Millais and Hunt had already given evidence of a new development of the colour-faculty in kindred themes. But neither in this arrangement in which the primary colours play a leading part, nor in the other where they are altogether suppressed, is there anything of that impassioned naturalism which marked the new movement. The breadths of crimson, blue-green and dark green of the one, and the detail of both, seem to be a something superimposed rather than of the fibre of the work. In the *Pegwell Bay* the ghostly range of chalk cliffs, with the comet of 1858 traced faintly on the October afterglow, appeals to the imagination, but the effect is marred by the puny treatment of the foreground, where the indiscriminate introduction of every detail of rock and weed disturbs the restfulness of the scene and the hour. The crinolined ladies, though somewhat prosaic, might have enhanced by contrast the impressiveness of the picture, had it not been for the irritating spottiness of their surroundings. His continued labours on the Arthurian series of frescoes would not help the colour-quality of his work in such easel pictures, and may account for the more neutral tone of the *George Herbert*, one of the latest of them.

William Dyce was elected to the Associateship of the Scottish Academy in 1835, and later on he held its honorary membership. At the Royal Academy he attained the rank of Academician in 1848, having been elected Associate four years previously.

Something of the difference of temperament which characterised Scott and Dyce may have been gathered from

the preceding pages. Though both alike sought after qualities hitherto neglected by the Scottish school, the results were hardly adequate to the talent of the artists. It seems, indeed, as if comparatively trivial circumstances had come between each and a much greater fulfilment. But as the greater men rise above circumstances, there must have been an inherent weakness in the nature or artistic equipment of both which prevented their rising to higher things. Nor is it difficult to find in their respective temperaments an explanation of such partial failure. These were as the poles asunder. Scott's was of an inflexible rigidity, and it was his dogged adherence to ideas he had taken up when hardly beyond boyhood, that led to the halting expression of faculties so rare and personal. He remains a warning to his successors that not even genius can afford to despise the means through which it has to be expressed. The morbid self-analysis of his journals gives the impression of one foredoomed to neglect and failure, but firmly resolved to face his destiny. But it cannot be said that he was neglected in the sense that some men of genius have been. Both to his brother artists, many of his distinguished fellow citizens, and visitors of note, the studio of David Scott was an attraction, and though the nature and scale of his work made commercial success an impossibility, he was not worse off in this respect than many others who have devoted themselves to a high ideal. "The ever ready hearts and hands of a few devoutly admiring friends," Dr. Brown tells us, "and the good prices brought by such pictures as did sell," enabled him to live in modest plenty. Commercial success has not often made for a higher achievement, and it is not the want of recognition in this sense that is responsible for

Scott's shortcoming. Inadequate means of expression, and the often strangely archaic treatment of his subjects, are the sufficient explanation of his uncertain position in the art world of to-day. So true is it that in painting "mere technique" is more than the seeing of visions and dreaming of dreams. But what an interest his singular temperament adds to Scott's character, and how it contrasts with that of his brother artist. Dyce writes to him from Edinburgh: "And what do you think of Rome? Does not its greatness and sublimity of character overwhelm you? All my recollections of it are associated with the most delightful, I may say exquisite feelings." It was far otherwise with Scott. His unrestful spirit was no more satisfied with the centre of the art world than with the corner he had occupied under St. Leonard's crags. He saw the same works of the masters, and visited the studios of the artists with whose fame Europe was resounding. But neither past nor present could overwhelm Scott. He weighed the merits and defects of the greatest as if he were one of themselves, and was not slow to detect the weakness of those German painters who had so fascinated his correspondent. Their works he describes as "a compound of antiquarianism and of gentle religious sentiment," and the whole movement as "singularly at variance with the general tendency of thought in the present day" and indicative of "exhaustion and senility."

In his more facile temperament, and his sympathy with this lapse into mediævalism, which took so many forms during the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century, Dyce presents a strong contrast to Scott. For a while the impression made on him by his early relations with the German painters was counteracted by his practice in

portraiture, but it was revived by his mission abroad and the fresco work in which he was subsequently engaged. Thenceforth his pictures show no trace of his Edinburgh period. It is difficult to imagine how the painter of *Harriet Maconochie* and *The Artist's Son* should have been so suddenly and completely diverted from a career which promised for him a place amongst the great portraitists of the century. But it is unfair to judge him by the standards of another time. In the thirties, and indeed until quite recently, portraiture was not assigned the high place it now holds. Few painters set out with the idea of devoting themselves to it. And one cannot but admire the abundance and versatility of a talent ever endeavouring to adapt itself to the new ideas of the time. The expectation of a revival of art through the practice of fresco painting has not been fulfilled, and though Dyce's work in this direction has a simplicity and dignity that saved it from the extravagances of that of Cornelius and Kaulbach, Muther's words that "it must remain an imported plant that cannot possibly thrive in a northern climate" seem equally true of Great Britain and Germany.

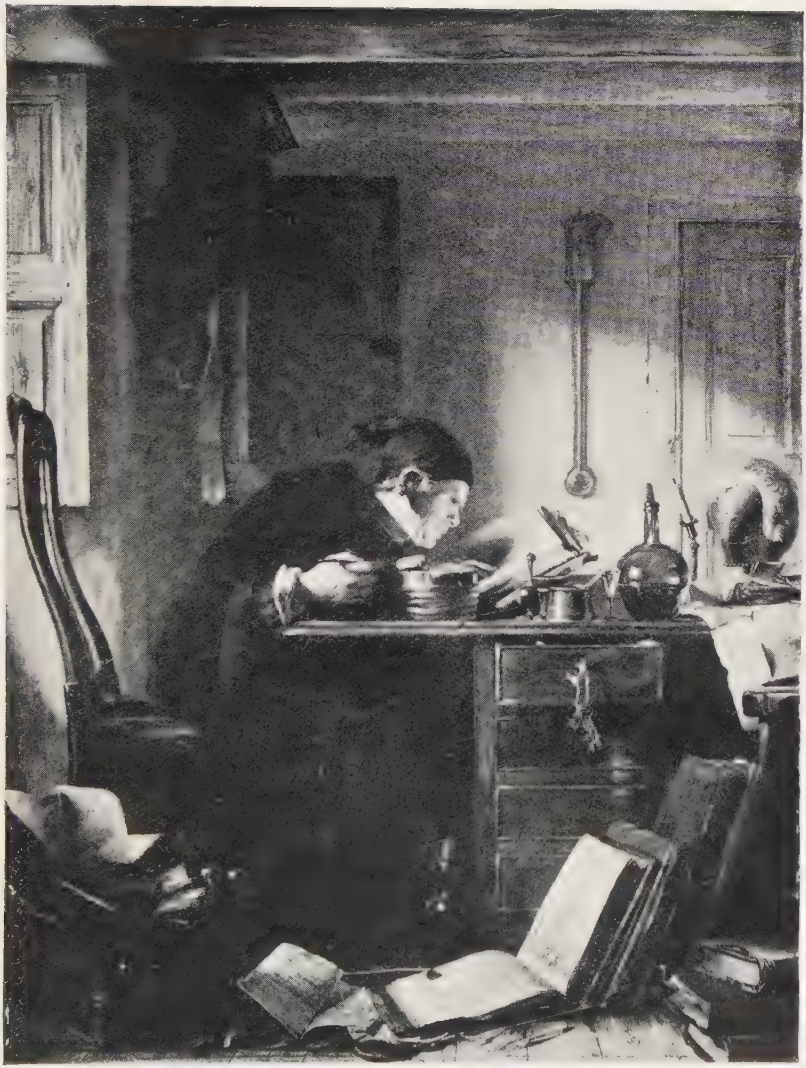
Of the several figure-painters of this period still to be noted the most talented is James Eckford Lauder. Younger than his brother Robert by nine years, his works are in a similar vein, though marked by a strong individuality. The brothers had been in Italy together, and whilst there James made many excellent copies from the works of the old masters. From his return to Scotland till the middle of the century, portraiture and subjects from Shakespeare and Scott form the bulk of his contributions to the Scottish Academy's exhibitions. Those from Shakespeare are the most numerous, scenes from "The

Tempest frequently occupying his brush, whilst from Scott's "Pirate" he repeats *Minna and Brenda* on three different occasions. Scriptural subjects appear now and again, and one or two of these rank amongst his ablest works. *The Ten Virgins* is well known throughout Scotland, having been engraved for the Royal Association. A more important picture and one which is less known is *The Parable of Forgiveness*, now in the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool. It is of large dimensions, having been painted for the Westminster Hall competition of 1847, where it gained a £200 premium. It illustrates the four verses of the parable in which the king, moved with compassion, forgives and releases the servant who owed him ten thousand talents, and who had been condemned to be sold with his wife and children and all that he had. From the position of the picture in the great staircase of the Liverpool Gallery it is impossible to make any close analysis of the workmanship. One can see, however, that there are many fine passages of colour for which the Eastern costume gives ample scope; the masses are finely arranged, and, though there is some want of suppleness in the drawing, the action is highly dramatic.

Lauder's qualities can be better judged from his small picture of *Bailie Duncan Macwheeble at Breakfast*,* surely one of the happiest translations ever made from the literary to the painter's art, making concrete, as it does, for thousands, a creation of which the finest art of the penman can only suggest a vague and nebulous version. Such translations are sometimes a positive misfortune, as displacing the more adequate conception the reader had formed for himself; but no one, hardly the author of

* In the National Gallery of Scotland.

"Waverley" himself, can have had in his mind's eye a Macwheeble so delightfully embodying the description of Bradwardine's man of law. Surrounded by the confusion of an apartment which serves at once as office and living-room, the bailie, in rusty black night-cap and morning gown, sits crouched over his *bicker* of oatmeal porridge eagerly scanning the document propped up beyond. The pot-bellied Dutch brandy-bottle with its accompanying glass, the metal inkstand and bent candlestick, and the wig on its wooden block, contest the limited space of the half-desk, half-table, with crumpled papers, accounts and books of reference. A confused heap of musty volumes is piled on a chair by the *doer's* elbow, and others, open or closed, encumber the foreground. Such complementary details would naturally suggest themselves, but there is a keener interpretation of character in making the bailie follow with his finger the lines of the document from which he reads. This, and the half-closed eye, tell of advancing years and the parsimony which delays the use of the inevitable spectacles. But no such embodying of the creation of a kindred art would have given Lauder's picture the high place it occupies in its own, had it not been supported by an adequate technique. It is through its simple and admirable arrangement of light and shade, its rendering of textures, and the happy introduction of a note or two of colour, that this little canvas is saved from being an inventory of what is described and suggested in "Waverley," and made a work of art in its own sphere. By the first of these the attention is concentrated on the shadowed face and figure of Macwheeble, which forms the nucleus of the composition, whilst the leathery surface of the flesh, the varied grain of wood and metal, of parch-



BAILIE M'WHEEBLE AT BREAKFAST

By J. Eckford Lauder, R.S.A.

IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF SCOTLAND

ment and calf binding, are rendered with a fuller brush and with a care and precision almost rivalling that of Fettes Douglas. On this small canvas the painter's reputation rests more securely than on his larger diploma work, *Hagar*, or even the elaborate composition in the Walker Art Gallery.

William Bonnar and George Simson were painters of less individuality. The former painted many *genre* pictures in which the weaker side of Wilkie's practice is evident. One of the most notable of these appeared at the Scottish Academy's exhibition of 1839, and represented the Buccleuch ladies visiting the cottage of a widow. In his later years he painted many portraits, some of which, those on a small scale especially, are handled with considerable verve and give the impression of being faithful likenesses. George Simson echoes the subjects and manner of his abler brother William, whilst R. McInnes, W. B. Johnstone, R. R. MacIan and Alexander Christie follow in the wake of the stronger exponents of history and *genre*. The last-named was the ablest of these. His picture, *Consulting the Gypsies*,* is admirable both in expression and technique, the latter reminiscent of the best early work of Erskine Nicol.

* In the possession of A. R. Don, Esq., Broughty Ferry.

CHAPTER XIII

DAVID ROBERTS AND THE SUCCESSORS OF THOMSON

During the thirties and forties Scottish landscape painting had shown symptoms of weakness, but a more virile art was to continue the fine lead that had been given by Thomson, John Wilson, and Williams. David Roberts, though his artistic career is associated with London rather than with Edinburgh, never lost touch with the country and the city of his birth, and his healthy productions, seen from time to time at the Scottish Academy, did much to keep in check the tendencies referred to at the close of chapter ten. After a hard struggle of some years duration, and considerable practice as a scene-painter, he found free scope for the peculiar bent of his talent—the delineation of architecture under pictorial effects. Beginning about 1821 with subjects from the picturesque Edinburgh of those days, and the ruined abbeys of southern Scotland, he soon extended his travels to the adjacent parts of the Continent, and ultimately drew his subjects from Italy, Spain, and the countries bordering the Levant. The example of Williams may have influenced him, or he may have been sent wandering by the same impulse that moved various other artists about that time.

In Roberts's work there is less of sentiment than in that

of the "Grecian." From his brush there is no *Plain of Marathon* or *Minerva Sunias*, but he has a perennial delight in the pictorial aspects of architecture seen under varying effects of light. Sometimes he essays extensive prospects like the *Rome* in the Scottish National Gallery, or the smaller *Edinburgh from the Calton Hill* at the Guildhall. Oftener some particular building or set of buildings is the theme, and perhaps he is at his best when dealing with the interiors of great churches or cathedrals, for these better suit the monochromatic scheme in which he loves to work. From first to last his methods remain the same; his application of them is enriched by experience, but his simple technique was early determined by his scene painting. It is as pronounced in his *Exterior of Antwerp Cathedral*, painted in 1827—of which there is a replica at the Guildhall—as in the *Chancel of St. Paul's Church, Antwerp*,* of twenty years later. In the Guildhall picture the scheme is already that of ambers, drabs, and warm whites, which served him through life; and this arrangement, as very often in his later works, is backed by a sky of blue with white clouds. The use of lines, drawn as if with a straight-edge, which plays so important a part in his work, is already evident, as also the picturesque introduction of figures, equally characteristic. The later Antwerp interior is typical of its class, and a fine example of how much can be got out of the methods adopted and a scheme so restricted in regard to colour. The interior, rather ornate in its lower parts, has the veiled light appropriate to sacred edifices; and the woodwork of the stalls, the pillared reredos and the pediments of the statues combine with the dark-robed figures of priests and congre-

* In the Tate Gallery.

gation to give value to the aerial spaces above. The light from the high windows on the right illumines the opposite wall, leaving the apse beyond in half-tone. Colour, as usual, is used sparingly, but the reds of altar steps and draperies are better harmonised than in many of the artist's works. The impasto has more body, and the vertical lines which give height to the vaulted ceiling are less pronounced than in his earlier practice. Everything is richer and fuller, the figures are more skilfully introduced, whilst the architecture is handled with extraordinary precision and picturesqueness of touch.

For such subjects as *Rome, Sunset from the Convent of San Onofrio*,* Roberts's methods are not so well suited. In his solemn and stately interiors one can forget the scene-painter, but hardly here. Yet, judged on its own lines, the picture is an undoubted success. It was presented by the artist to the Royal Scottish Academy in 1857, in fulfilment of a promise that when they got a gallery they could call their own, he would paint them a picture. Looking eastward from the cypress-clad slopes of the Janiculum, the nearer portion of the city lies in broad shadow, only the loftier towers and two stone pines in the immediate foreground catching the ruddy glow. The farther districts of St. Angelo and the Pincian, with the hills that fringe the Campagna, still bask in sunlight. Above, rosy cloudlets float on a saffron sky. A loop of the Tiber winds through the nearer quarters of the city, its waters reflecting in the middle distance the pale gold of the east. This gleam of light, placed in skilful but not too obvious juxtaposition to the darks of cypress and pine,

* In the Scottish National Gallery. The canvas is 168 in. by 84 in. oblong.

CHANCEL OF THE COLLEGIATE CHURCH OF ST. PAUL AT ANTWERP

By David Roberts, R.A., *H.R.S.A.*

IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF BRITISH ART

is the point on which the eye rests, and around which the various elements of interest group themselves in accordance with that subtle law which is the secret of the composer. A subject and an effect like this, recalling Mrs. Hemans's familiar lines

> Thou hast the sunset's glow,
> Rome, for thy dower,

clearly demanded something more than the artist's usual scheme of buffs and drabs. Roberts does not hesitate; he attacks the colour-effect, which would have tried a master, in no half-hearted way, and if he has not quite succeeded, neither has he failed as one might have predicted. All painters know how difficult it is to get reds to take on the quality of light, but the artist has not shirked the crimson hues of the Roman sunset, and he has come wonderfully near to attaining complete success. It is quality rather than tint that fails him. Something of the technique in which so many of his countrymen excelled, and less of the fresco-like tones of the scene-painter, would have been invaluable here. For both in the sunlit and shadowed expanses of this canvas, one feels the inadequacy of such methods more keenly than where the gamut is more restricted. They insist, so to speak, on their kinship with the drop-scene, and with that art of mural decoration in which a dead or flat colour surface is appropriate. On analysis, the workmanship exhibits in a marvellous degree the artist's clever treatment of the masses and detail of architecture, and especially the use he makes of lines to enforce their leading features. The gaily-clad figures who lounge or disport themselves on the terraced stairs in the foreground, though cleverly

introduced, as always, rather enforce the scenic element of this notable picture.

Though after the first few years Roberts's subjects were mostly drawn from Continental or Eastern countries, he varied these with canvases from both England and Scotland, and towards the close of his life he was much interested in the more picturesque aspects of London. Both his qualities and limitations are found in the illustrative works he undertook at different times. The most important of these was Sketches in the Holy Land, &c., begun in 1838, for the six volumes of which Roberts's sketches were lithographed by Louis Haghe. The work cost £50,000 in the production, yet so popular was it that it yielded a good profit to the publishers. The drawings are reproduced on a tinted ground, reinforced sometimes by deeper shades. White is freely used, and at times one or two simple neutral tones in sky, water, and draperies. The impression left after turning over a volume or two is not altogether satisfactory. Few of the plates give any sense of the glamour of the Orient or of the mystery of the Desert. And these drawings, even more than his pictures, are indebted to the skill with which figures are introduced. Often the picturesque groups of veiled women, Moslem soldiery or Arab caravan divide the interest with the landscape. The sweeping cavalcade of mounted spearmen in the foreground of *Sebate* recalls the canvases of Fromentin, or the no less graphic word-pictures of his *Summer in the Sahara*.

Roberts's career, from the day he settled in London, was one of unvarying, one might almost say monotonous success. His pictures were no sooner produced than sold, and the ease and certainty with which he worked enabled him to produce abundantly. Mr. Ballantine, his bio-

grapher, catalogues nearly three hundred, the great bulk of which were sold at prices ranging from a hundred to a thousand guineas. Added to sketches done for "The Holy Land," "Picturesque Sketches in Spain," and contributions to "Landscape Annuals," this represents an immense industry, even allowing for the simplicity to which he had reduced his methods. And assuredly few men have attained such results with so simple an outfit as regards technique. In this matter he differs altogether from the practice of his countrymen. The pigment is applied more in the manner of water than of oil colour. It has the consistency of a thin paste, and its lack of quality is redeemed only by a consummate knowledge of the simpler and more obvious effects of Nature, and by the adroitness with which he uses architectural forms to give pictorial variety to sunlit frontage or shady interior. His use of lines in accenting structure and detail resembles somewhat and serves the same purpose as the pencilling with which the early water-colourists reinforced their brushwork. To sum up, Roberts's art has its strict limitations. His pictures touch none of the deeper emotions, nor have they the versatility of observation or the higher graces of technique equally valuable in the painter's art. No great mental effort has gone to their production, but within his limits he shows great talent, and few painters have brought more pleasure to their countrymen.

Biographical details have been avoided in the foregoing pages, but one can hardly withhold a few words on a career that reads like a romance. The son of a poor cobbler in Stockbridge, the story goes that the boy was caught by Raeburn on his garden wall, but gently treated when the laird of Deanhaugh found that the intruder's

purpose was to sketch a Gothic window in his summer-house. He was early indentured to a house-painter, and the seven years of apprenticeship under an exacting master were solaced only by the companionship of two like-minded enthusiasts. The three constituted a small life class where they took turns in sitting. After various spells of work—once with a travelling circus, where he not only looked after the scenic department but took part in the performances when required—he was engaged as a scene-painter, first in Glasgow and then in Edinburgh, where, having some two pounds a week, he married. Shortly afterwards he accepted a situation at Drury Lane, collaborating there with Stanfield, whose acquaintance he had made in Glasgow. This was the beginning of a life-long friendship, as the familiar "Stanny" of Roberts's letters sufficiently testifies. When nearly forty years later, in the zenith of their reputation, they were entertained at a banquet given in their honour by the Royal Scottish Academy, thoughts of these early associations must have been vividly borne in on them. The careers of both, after those first struggles, had been chequered by none of the disappointments that so often come to greater artists. In addition to professional honours and rewards, Roberts holds the unique position amongst Scottish artists of having received the highest compliment the capital of his country can give, his name ranking with those of distinguished statesmen, soldiers, and scientists, on the burgess roll of the city.

Though without his ideality, or even the graces of some of his own weaker contemporaries, Horatio Macculloch was undoubtedly the continuator of the art of Thomson. Had Simson lived longer and had he returned to land-

scape, the succession might have been in abler hands, but even so, his removal to London would have prevented his art taking the native direction Thomson had inaugurated, nor is there much likelihood of a talent so constituted having ever devoted more than a share of its energies to any one department. A resident landscapist in the sense in which Turner, Constable, and Thomson himself, practised the art, and not one who merely painted landscape by turns, was necessary to confirm the lead already given. These conditions were fulfilled by the talented Glaswegian, born on the night the city was illuminated for the victory of Trafalgar, and hence called Horatio. For half a century his undivided energies were given to the practice of landscape. During his later teens he had some instruction from John Knox, a Glasgow landscapist to whom Macnee had just been apprenticed. For some years he was intimately associated with the latter and with W. L. Leitch, painting snuff-boxes with them at Cumnock; and later he and Macnee were employed by Lizars of Edinburgh to colour prints. Those experiences past, he settled in his native city, and the first field for his more serious efforts was the scenery within easy distance of Glasgow. The forest of Cadzow and the lower valleys of the Clyde and Avon were especially attractive to him. So congenial, indeed, were these scenes that for three years he took up his abode in the neighbouring town of Hamilton, and it was not till he was elected Academician in 1838, that he removed to Edinburgh. From that time till his death nearly thirty years later, Macculloch was the most popular of Scottish landscape painters. This popularity, to which various circumstances contributed, has not been maintained, and, as is not unusual

in such cases, the swing of the pendulum has gone too far, and his work is perhaps as much underrated now, as it was overrated in his lifetime.

Amongst the adventitious circumstances tending to Macculloch's popularity, the national character of his work bulks most largely, and especially his having turned to the portrayal of the Highlands when tourists were more and more flooding the scenes of "The Lady of the Lake" and "The Lord of the Isles," hitherto an almost undiscovered country to the "Sassenach." His earliest pictures, as has been indicated, dealt with the scenery of the Middle Ward and the adjoining districts. But in Glasgow, and even at Hamilton, he was on the fringe of the Highlands, and he soon discovered the rich vein that lay to his hand. As early as 1833 – he had first exhibited in 1829—such titles as *Loch Lomond*, *Head of Loch Fyne*, and *Ben Cruachan, Argyllshire*, show that he had found what was to become his speciality in art. And this new direction was the occasion, as his biographer * points out, of the strongly individual style by which it is henceforth distinguished. His earliest landscapes, as described by Fraser, were based on the practice of Thomson, and one is inclined to doubt whether into his new style Macculloch might not with advantage have carried something more of the richness of those early pictures. Later in his monograph Mr. Fraser admits it as a defect in Macculloch that, after this change, he tended to repeat and exaggerate his own peculiar qualities. Individuality is a great matter in Art, but a personality strong enough to assimilate the finer qualities of forerunners or contemporaries is better still. We are told

* "Scottish Landscape. The Works of Horatio Macculloch." Alexander Fraser, R.S.A. Edinburgh, 1872.

that Constable he rather tolerated than admired, and that "praise bestowed in his hearing on John Linnell or David Cox always irritated him." His own manner might have benefited greatly from a more tolerant attitude towards his contemporaries, nor, in abandoning the conventions of Thomson, was it necessary to forego his finer qualities, as in great measure he did.

But in one important direction Macculloch's pictures show a true advance. They delineate a land we know and love in place of the cosmopolitan regions of Thomson and the Nasmyths. For assuredly no one awake to the charm of Highland scenery can fail to recognise in the placid waters, serrated mountain ranges, and breezy skies of the painter of *Loch Achray*, *Glencoe*, and *Dunstaffnage Castle*,* a vivid reminiscence of such scenes, or, in his far-drawn straths and glens, something of the sentiment that broods over a land of wistful memories, depopulated "that a degenerate lord might boast his sheep." Macculloch has a keen eye for the more obvious characteristics of Highland landscape boulder-strewn slope, clinging copsewood or weird contour of blasted pine in the foreground, the shadowed forms of mound or hillock seen against rising mist in the middle distance, and the shower-blurred ranges beyond—all are familiar in his numerous canvases. His failing is rather to overcrowd those features and to force the contrasts. In such pictures as *Dunstaffnage Castle* and *My Heart's in the Highlands** one would think he is striving to bring together every characteristic of the country, whilst in *Mist on the Mountain*, of 1862, the contrast of the dark wooded knolls with the rising mist is so pronounced as to injure an otherwise finely conceived

* In the Kelvingrove Museum, Glasgow.

subject. The *Dunstaffnage* suffers from a weakness to which very oblong pictures are liable, the various sources of interest are too equally spread over the canvas. One *coup d'œil* does not suffice. The eye is attracted alternately by the castle dominating the wooded slopes of the middle distance, and the picturesque clachan and rough "landscape with cattle" foreground at the other end of the picture. In spite of the connecting link of quiet loch and encircling hills the composition partakes of the panoramic. *My Heart's in the Highlands* is better concentrated, but it would have lost nothing by a little less of serrated peak and broken sky than the artist has given. In the *Deer Forest in Skye*, one of his most poetic conceptions, the restful middle distance and massive grandeur of the mountain range beyond are sadly marred by the too fantastic peaks which mingle with the cloudland, and by the confusion of boulders in the immediate foreground. The deer are beautifully introduced; the proud leader moving off from the mountain pool recalls the opening line of "The Lady of the Lake."

As an executant Macculloch wielded a facile—a too facile brush. The individuality of style and the tendency to repeat and exaggerate his own qualities led on to very pronounced mannerisms. He never got rid of the conventional treatment of foliage practised by the Nasmyths and earlier painters: witness *A Lowland River* and his diploma work *Evening* at the Mound. Fraser says that in painting his trees and foreground he used largely a goose quill sable. So long as the result is satisfactory the means are of little consequence, but to artists the weapon seems hardly one with which to attack broad masses of foliage. His technique has other and even more serious defects,

GLENCOE

By Horatio Macculloch, R.S.A.

THE PROPERTY OF THE CORPORATION OF GLASGOW

considering the nature of his subjects. His way of expressing mountain and water, especially still water, sometimes verges on the spurious. Palgrave's phrase about *Loch Achray*, shown at Manchester in 1857—"it is reflection without surface"—can hardly be gainsaid in presence of such pictures as *Inverlochy Castle** and *Loch Maree*. In his treatment of the torrent seamed flanks of great mountains such as those in *Glencoe*, and the tumbled masses of hills in *Benvenue*, detail of form is too little subordinated to the harmonising effect of atmosphere. It is hard and edgy; whilst the stones and boulders of his foregrounds which he introduces so abundantly, the lights on tree stems, rushes and other herbage have a false glitter that seriously disturbs the breadth and restfulness of his compositions. The want of atmosphere gives an unconvincing look to his coloration, which in itself is not of fine quality. For in spite of the devices of mist and cloud, of vapour-dimmed distance and the inevitable peat smoke, there is a want of true atmosphere in these canvases. A finer perception of this ever-present element would have saved Macculloch from various mannerisms. His production would have been lessened—for no one whose aim is to render truly the intricate character of Highland scenery is in any danger of over-production—but in quality he would have gained infinitely. It is useless to dwell on what might have been; let us rather recognise thankfully what Macculloch revealed to us of the beauty of the Highlands.

Harvey, whose last fifteen years were devoted mostly to landscape, approached nature from a different standpoint. For backgrounds to his Covenanting pictures he was led much amongst the uplands of our south-western counties.

* In the National Gallery of Scotland.

To the superficial eye there is little that is attractive or picturesque in those undulating grassy hills or the heath-clad table-lands which were the refuge of our forefathers. But the painter of *Drumclog* and the *Communion* thought of them as in sympathy with his subjects, of their sunshine as soothing, or their mists veiling from the rage of the persecutor. Thus his landscapes are deeply emotional, even when, in later days, he treated themes far removed from such tragic memories.

Though such was its origin, Harvey's landscape, like Macculloch's, is mostly Highland, but their renderings differ as widely as did the spirit in which they approached them. Macculloch's pictorial combinations make an irresistible appeal to the ordinary observer ; Harvey sets himself the more arduous task of interpreting the "still, small voice" which speaks through all Nature's manifestations to her more thoughtful worshippers. What the tourist sees from the four-in-hand, or from the deck of the Clansman, is presented in sublimated form in Macculloch's attractive compositions. Harvey's pictures give the deeper sentiment which appeals to a smaller circle. Their number is limited—the artist was approaching sixty when he became a landscapist—nor were his works produced by Macculloch's facile methods. He seldom dealt in striking effects, rugged peaks and long-drawn vistas are rare ; but more thought and labour have gone to the painting of some of these comparatively featureless subjects than to a dozen of the more scenic effects of the popular Horatio. Of *The Enterkin*, his earliest notable landscape, Dr Brown says * that "it gives the spirit, the idea of the place, its gentle gloom, its depth

* "Horæ Subsecivæ." 3rd series. Edinburgh, 1882.

and height, its unity, its sacred peace." And what a subject from which to evolve such emotions!—a zig-zag scaur with the steep, smooth slope of grassy hills on either hand. A few boulders mark the course of the mountain streamlet, tree stems, blasted or with scant leafage, lean over a diminutive waterfall near the foreground, and a road high up on the left winds towards the notch where a glimpse of sky indents the tame outline of the hills. The picture is saved by the wandering breadth of sunlight that crosses the valley and the vapoury shadow that enshrouds and disguises its undistinguished forms. Nor is there much more of pictorial in *Glen Dhu, Arran*,* perhaps the most impressive of the artist's landscapes, where a ridge of hills of no pronounced contour crosses the canvas from side to side, leaving only the narrowest margin of sky. This mountain barrier, seen from a foreground which slopes rapidly downwards, shuts in the view at about half a mile's distance. Nothing lends itself to the construction of a scheme such as artists love; there are no receding planes, escapes into a vague distance, or possibilities for picturesque and telling contrast of masses. From the foreground of heath and withered grass the eye passes at once to a great hollow scooped in the front of the opposing range. It is a picture of middle distance, and its charm consists in the breadth of veiled sunshine and slumbrous shadow which gives at once a great unity and infinite variety to what would else be prosaic enough. The glint of tiny burn below—one hears its tinkle—and the shepherds driving their flock towards the pen beyond, only accent the solitude, the pastoral peace, and the restfulness of the scene. As regards technique, it is closely akin to the

* In the possession of the Misses Harvey, Edinburgh.

Sheep Shearing of the previous year, though, owing to deeply wrought glazes and scumblings, it is unfortunately not in such good condition. The later landscapes are in excellent preservation. They present the same technical qualities, and mostly depict the same more subtle charm of Highland scenery, but few of them have the concentration of motive that distinguishes the *Glen Dhu*. Several are of the very oblong form which makes this difficult. *A Drove Road*,* *Inverarnan*, *Head of Loch Lomond*, and the beautiful composition entitled *Scenery in the Highlands*, † are instances. In *Callernish—Druid Remains*, † a different chord is touched in sympathy with the subject, and the crowded standing stones of the Long Island are seen under a weird moonlight effect.

It is difficult to say how far the emotional element can make up for the want of the more pictorial arrangements in which most great landscapists have dealt. The grand massing and striking contrasts of Gainsborough, Constable, and Turner, are almost precluded in Harvey's treatment of the grassy uplands of southern Scotland or even of the Highlands; but those who have come under the spell of *Glen Dhu* and *The Enterkin* have found their less pronounced chiaroscuro no less satisfactory.

Meanwhile, the delineation of sea and shore was continued by a survivor of several who had practised the same branch. Like Simson and Ewbank, E. T. Crawford shows the influence of John Wilson, and though only a little younger, he long outlived both. So that it is he who links the earlier sea and coast painting with the art of Bough and more recent artists. Later, the influence of

* In the Kelvingrove Museum, Glasgow.

† In the possession of the Misses Harvey, Edinburgh.

Thomson adds something of its largeness to his work. Like his early contemporaries, Crawford painted inland as well as coast subjects, but it is as a painter of the latter that he is best known. For all three Holland had a strong attraction, and their renderings of its canals, wharves, and waterways, have much in common, especially those of Simson and Crawford. In those Dutch subjects, where white and reddish brown sails and varnished hulls are mirrored in waters whose shores are broken by the frequent windmill or church tower: where the blacks and reds of costume are the strongest notes and the tricolor droops on a pale sky, it is difficult sometimes to assign the authorship. On the whole, Simson's are of a finer colour quality, and his pencilling in spar and cordage is more delicate; but sometimes Crawford runs him so close as almost to justify the doubt.

Our own shores were treated in the same lightsome schemes. With sails spread or half furled vessels unload by wooden wharves, whilst lesser craft cluster about or are seen in the offing. Or carts and red-capped fishermen bustle about the sloop or schooner heeled over by the receding tide—all the picturesque incidents, indeed, of the coasting-trade of those days were taken advantage of by Crawford as by other painters of our coasts. His visits to Holland were repeated at intervals, the beach at Scheveningen, Dordrecht, the Port of Delft, and the quays of Rotterdam engaging his brush, sometimes almost to the exclusion of other subjects, till with advancing years he ceased to exhibit. In another class of subjects, where he deals with our rock-bound eastern coast, the influence of Thomson is felt. With a difference, however, for the brown and amber and deep indigo in which the amateur's

heroic schemes were conceived have approximated somewhat to the true colours of nature. In such pictures as *Tantallon Castle* and his diploma *Coast Scene*, Crawford shows in the large configuration of cliff and mouldering ruin, the inclosing lines of cumuli against which they are set, and darkening sea, much of the grandeur of the earlier master, in combination with something of the more natural lighting and local colour of modern landscape. They lack the glow and gloom of Thomson's more frankly conventional schemes, but the infusion of the light of common day is some recompense for qualities which lent themselves so readily to the vagaries of a fancy not always under strict control. His work is neither imaginative nor emotional; on the other hand, it avoids that touch of the theatrical which with some contemporary landscapists did duty for those qualities. It is eminently sane and healthy. Crawford was a capable craftsman always, though both in method and subject his art was somewhat restricted; his work has little variety of surface, the material being of a rather monotonous consistency throughout. He avoids the more positive colours; warm whites, buffs and siennas, neutral blues and grays deepening to indigo and umber, with a green tending to drab, constitute his restrained gamut. *Crossing the Bar*, purchased by the Royal Association for the National collection, shows that the influence of Wilson was still strong in his work of the early sixties.

A word may be said here of a painter whose reputation hardly extends beyond the town with which his name is associated, John Fleming, of Greenock. As early as 1813 he sent to an exhibition held in the western seaport a picture —*Peter denying Christ*—and various landscapes, but he is

TANTALLON CASTLE

best known by a series of works painted for "Swan's Lakes of Scotland," published in 1834. These are of small dimensions, but many of them possess great charm, both of composition and colour. Now and then his treatment of mountain and loch is highly poetical, whether, as in *Loch Alsh*, the effect is of brooding storm over naked precipice and sullen waters, or in *Loch Oich*, where the more fertile shores and the stronghold of the Macdonells are bathed in the golden vapours of a summer sunset. It is regrettable that in many of Fleming's works the extreme beauty of distance and middle distance is marred by conventionally treated foregrounds. But this was a fault not confined to the provincial painter.

CHAPTER XIV

JOHN PHILLIP AND JAMES DRUMMOND

Whilst the enthusiasm which had led to the formation of the Scottish Academy was yet in its first ardour, and the capital was attracting to itself the art talent, not of Scotland only but of the North of England, one who was to rank amongst her most distinguished painters was giving Edinburgh the go-by. Few northern artists, even of those who had subsequently made London their head-quarters, had hitherto escaped a year or two's training at the Trustees' Academy or with one or other of the painters who supplemented their professional work by teaching, and now it seemed less likely than ever. But the unlikely happened when, in 1834, an apprentice boy, John Phillip by name, reached London from Aberdeen, without setting foot on the intermediate stepping-stone. And though after a year or two in the studio of J. M. Joy, and at the schools of the Royal Academy, young Phillip worked for some years in the North, he remained faithful to the city of Bon-Accord, till in 1846 he made London his head-quarters. Though thus detached from the main stream of Scottish pain ing, his subjects and his methods remain as national as those of the figure-painters of the North, till the exigencies of health led to that association with

Spain which was attended with such splendid results towards the close of his career.

The titles of his earliest pictures, *Highland Courtship; Bruce about to receive the Sacrament on the morning previous to the Battle of Bannockburn; The New Scholar; A Scotch Baptism;* sufficiently attest this. The one thing that differentiates him from contemporary Scottish painters in this matter is the absence of subjects from Sir Walter Scott; a *Scene from Old Mortality*, with a sketch and an unfinished picture of *The Fair Maid of Perth*,* sum up his indebtedness to the novelist. In regard to method his work is closely akin to that which Harvey and Duncan had inherited from Wilkie, and which Faed and others were to continue to a later day. In *A Highland Lassie*,* of 1841, and two small portraits of himself of a year or two earlier, his affinity with native art is less felt than in the sketches for *The New Scholar*† and *A Scotch Baptism*,† of 1846, and the picture *Presbyterian Catechising*,‡ of the year following. These latter exhibit all the characteristics of the school, its breadth of transparent shadow, its deft if somewhat flimsy modelling, and effective arrangement of light and shade. *The Catechising*, as one of the earliest of Phillip's more ambitious works, and as it contains in embryo something of his future excellence, deserves more than a passing word. The picture represents an ecclesiastical usage now in abeyance, but which in Phillip's youth would be common enough, where the inhabitants of some farm-town or rural district were assembled in the most commodious house available, to undergo examination in

* In the Aberdeen Art Gallery.

† In the possession of Mrs. Orchar, Dundee.

‡ In the possession of J. Jordan, Esq., Edinburgh.

Biblical knowledge at the hands of their parish minister. Both Wilkie and Harvey have treated kindred scenes in a technique very similar, but the interest of Phillip's com position, from this point of view, is that here and there it reveals a personal note which asserted itself later. For the most part the painting has the flimsiness to which the Scottish methods tended, and although the handling is broad and suave, the figures generally, and especially those in fuller light, want relief. The face and figure of the catechist himself have more substance; but it is in the painting of some of the subsidiary personages that some-thing of the racy fluency of the future Phillip appears. *A Country Fair*,* a sketch for a picture exhibited at the Royal Academy in the following year, is admirable in its observation of the humours of the occasion; a sort of later *Pitlessie*. The thin brushwork is delightfully suggestive in parts, but the colours are in places ill assorted and raw; and even in a sketch one could desire something more of substance and body. *Recruiting*,* though painted within a year or two of his first visit to Spain, is, as regards method, as far from what was so soon to be as any of his earlier pictures; nay, the painter of these bewigged and ruffled country gentlemen, lawyers and military men, has perhaps less affinity with "Phillip of Spain" than he who painted *Presbyterian Catechising*. In *Baptism in Scotland*, 1850, Phillip returned to an earlier subject, and in the following year *A Scotch Washing*, and *The Spae-wife of the Clachan*, continued the Scottish series. This year 1851 was an eventful one in the artist's career. A threatened collapse of health led to his seeking a more genial climate, and, fortunately, the choice fell on Spain.

* In the possession of J. Jordan, Esq., Edinburgh.

Sometimes a change of environment leads to a sudden expansion of faculty. Phillip is one of the most remarkable instances of this. The transition from Buchan to Seville as a field for subject-matter was sufficiently drastic. Perhaps it was the very completeness of the change that awakened an answering chord in the æsthetic perceptions of the Scotsman, as men often take to their opposites in matters of personal liking. However that may be, from henceforth there is a surprising and continuous development in Phillip's art. The first notable result of this earliest sojourn in Andalusia was *A Letter Writer, Seville.** This picture, and *Collecting the Offerings in a Scotch Kirk*, exhibited in 1853 and 1854 respectively, show in their elaboration of detail that Phillip did not altogether escape the influence of the Pre-Raphaelite movement, but, unlike his townsman Dyce, there was no response in the younger artist's nature to the more marked characteristics of the "Brethren." In the course of a few years, even the "finish," which in the public eye was their chief distinction, gave place to the broader treatment of his later Spanish period. Mr. Dafforne,† in a sketch of the artist's career, says that these Spanish visits made little or no alteration in Phillip's manner, and that this only confirmed and strengthened that which he had already adopted. In this matter he contrasts him with Sir David Wilkie, whose style was admittedly affected by his visits to the Peninsula. But if there was no change of manner, there was such a development of powers during the years 1851-8, which include his first two visits, as to amount to much the same thing. Even in the slighter work of these years a change

* In the Royal Collection.

† "Pictures by John Phillip." James Dafforne.

is observable, the hand is quickened in the application of the more solid pigment, and though the darker parts remain transparent and open, they have lost the flimsy appearance of the earlier period.

As the result of a second visit to the Peninsula made in company with Mr. Ansdell, he exhibited in 1857 *The Prison Window, Seville.** A touching incident of Spanish life is here portrayed with the increased skill Phillip now has at command. A young mother, of strongly marked national type, holds her child to the barred window, whence the father extends a brawny arm to clasp it, kissing it eagerly the while. Midway between this and *Gossips at a Well* in the same collection, a little picture, *The Huff*,† an incident in which two fashionably attired senoritas of some crowded Prado or Alameda play the leading *rôle*, shows increasing deftness of hand and acquaintance with the sparkle of Spanish colour and light. The *Gossips*, of the Tate Gallery, is a more elaborate composition than its neighbour, *The Prison Window*. Exhibited four years later, it shows a great advance in technical qualities, and though there is not yet the full flavour of his latest works, the striking of pure limpid colour over a heavier underpainting, which became so marked a feature of his last lustrum, is distinctly felt. Now, every succeeding year seems to bring an increase of power, *Agua Benedita* and *The Water Drinkers*, of 1862, are followed by *The House of Commons 1860*, *La Gloria—A Spanish Wake*, *The Early Career of Murillo*, *A Chat round the Brasero;* till in 1867, three works contributed by the artist's executors wind up the series. These last included *Antonia*, one of his fancifully treated single figures, the others, "*O Nannie*,

* In the Tate Gallery. † In the Guildhall Collection.

wilt thou gang wi' me?" and *A Highland Lassie reading*, indicate a return to Scottish subjects.

Phillip's exhibited works give little idea of his industry. Four or five little bits which have found a permanent home at the Guildhall may be taken as representative of many others painted between 1859–64 but not exhibited. Of more importance and also typical of numerous pictures not shown in the artist's lifetime, is that entitled *Faith*, in the same collection. Painted in 1864, it represents the artist in the maturity of his powers. A young woman, whose rough chocolate-coloured shawl marks her as of the people, looks upward with rosary in clasped hands, to a cross on the massive pillar of some sacred edifice. She is seen in profile and to the waist: her features are shadowed and her coarse black hair is a little dishevelled, but all the richness of the South, and the ardour of an unquestioning belief are expressed in the olive cheek, and the lustrous eye she turns on the sacred symbol. The colour scheme is more reticent than usual: a stripe of lemon in the white kerchief and a hint of red skirt serve only to accent the sombre green and brown of sleeve and shawl, and the umbers and lights of the background. All Phillip is here, both in sentiment and technique. *El Cigarillo*, of the same date, depicts with equal verve a charming brunette and the more mundane joys of "a quiet whiff."

But the triumph of this year, which marks the culmination of his powers, was *La Gloria—A Spanish Wake*. This picture, begun at Seville in 1860, was a revelation even to the artist's admirers, combining as it does the various excellences the painter had already shown, in a typical subject and on a large scale. The great canvas, which

dazzles one for a moment with its wealth of light and colour, reveals a scene in strange contrast—to Northern ideas—with the event ; the solemnity of death marked not by sad countenance and sombre apparel, but by revelry of music and the dance. In some poor quarter of the Andalusian capital a child's death is being thus celebrated. On the right, the assembled friends make merry where the almost tropical sunlight floods the little courtyard, uniting in one bouquet-like blaze the whirl of coloured skirts and floating shawls towards the centre of the picture. Here the belle of the occasion points the "fantastic toe" over against her clean-built *vis-a-vis* in the short brown jacket and tight nether garments of the bull-ring. The spectators look admiration, not unmixed with envy on the part of the girls, at this superb creature, who has snatched the cap from her partner's head, brandishing it aloft with graceful triumphant gesture. The musicians incite the well-matched pair to further efforts, supplementing their instruments with the voice, as is their wont in moments of excitement. Eye and ear are filled with music and light and the shuffle of feet. Apart from this motley throng, in the shadow of the stricken house, the mother has stolen aside to look again on her dead child, a glimpse of whose waxen features is seen athwart the drawn curtain of the doorway. Her less sensitive husband stoops over her, laying a sympathetic hand on her shoulder, a female friend kneels by. This shadowed group supplies the grave element to the composition, and acts as a foil to the sunlit spaces and the tumult beyond. Low dwelling-houses with latticed balconies, and rosy-toned street and tower telling light against the blue, with a hint of distant sierra, close in the scene. Such a subject lends

LA GLORIA

By John Phillip, R.A., *H.*R.S.A.

itself to strong contrasts and a sentiment which is apt to become unhealthy. With a less robust temperament this might have happened, but here, even the glimpse of the dead child in the sickly lamplight of the darkened room causes no feeling of repugnance. The free air, the light, the abounding vitality, and, above all, the spontaneity and gusto of the technique, counteract any such tendency. In this result a premier place is claimed for the technique. If we try to imagine the scene rendered with a less vivacious brush—with the timid handling and pasty material of a Paul Delaroche say, or the harder precision of a Gérôme—what is the result? The writer at least believes that the morbid element would assert itself, and that the picture might even become one of ghastly contrasts and trivial sentiment. For it is the same trumpet note—*cri de clarion* *—of colour and execution that transforms Rubens's martyrdoms and crucifixions into veritable triumphs, that saves this incident, in the hands of Phillip, from anything of the unpleasantness to which the subject was peculiarly open.

The pictorial arrangement and technical qualities which count for so much with Phillip may be briefly adverted to. Though the first impression is of dazzling and pervading light, the left half and foreground of the canvas are in broad shadow. Even of the crowded groups in the open space the musicians and those beyond show more of dark than light, owing to the incidence of the sun's rays and the distribution of local colour. The illusion of light comes mainly from the use made of the central figure and the way she is related to her surroundings. The devices by which this has been attained are worth

* "Les Maîtres d'Autrefois." Fromentin. P. 48.

consideration. The senorita has the finer proportions and complexion—a sort of deadened olive—of a grade or two higher in the social scale than her sister revellers. Her magnificent appointment tells the same tale. With white floating shawl and voluminous skirts of rose pink, held so as to expose a snowy fringe of laced petticoat, she seems to radiate light all about her. This comes not of her brilliant apparel merely, but because of its relation to similar or consenting hues around. The rosy tones of the architecture, the concert of warm and cooler whites, of neutrals, turquoise, and lemon, by which she is surrounded, the fierce refraction from the sun-baked ground, and the flaming skirt of a woman seated close by, help alike to feed and to diffuse the light she emits. Farther off, the crimson and black ribbon-knots of the guitar accent it by contrast, and the varied colours of shawl and uniform carry the sparkle to the farthest limits of the crowd, the sun's fiery finger mingling it even with the cooler breadths of shadow. The technique is delightful. By this time Phillip had attained full mastery of his materials, and it is a treat, for those who can appreciate the management of the brush, to follow his fluent hand through this brilliant orchestration of grave and gay. In some of his later pictures the bravura is carried farther and the adaptation of means to an end is perhaps more striking. But, with a sufficiency of racy handling, there is here a closer rendering of the beauty and character of some of the individual heads hardly to be found in those others. How reticent is the treatment, for example, in that of the central figure. The brush seems to dwell on and caress the mobile features and silky skin, adapting itself with ease to the modelling of the various surfaces, and following the lie and grain of

the flesh in a way that is too often forgotten in modern methods. Again, in the nearest guitar player, where the expression of mixed emotions—the exaltation and excitement of song and dance, and sympathy with the mourners—demanded a graver method, could any more searching analysis have succeeded better than the free yet careful handling here employed? The brush is fuller, the material more succulent than in the face of the dancing girl, and the slightly-drawn brow and starting tear are achieved with a softness and suavity of touch which exactly fulfil the purpose. The group of which she forms one, with their bravery of striped fabrics and gaudy kerchiefs, supplies one of the most fascinating passages of the picture. The heads are less dwelt on as they recede from the centre of interest; that of the smiling matador is more fully realised than those of the gipsy-like loungers in sombrero and shirt-sleeves, though the half-shaded face of one is painted with rare verve and a more loaded pigment of rich quality. The faces of the group in shadow are treated with a handling in consonance with the greater breadth and restfulness of those parts. As to accessories, the artist's hand seems to revel in the picturesque environment, and in the coarser or finer fabrics and adornments in which Spain is so rich. With large but well-considered brushwork he sweeps in the broader surfaces, and over these, especially in the lighter passages, one can mark the glazings and scumblings, and the raspings of heavier consistency which give completion to the forms and resonance to the colour. The bold plum-coloured stripes in the dress of the guitar player, and the orange, turquoise, and red, of the kerchiefs with which she and her companions are bedecked, are thus superimposed

on a more solid under-painting. Again, the brilliance of the dancing girl's skirt is due to the manner in which the pure rose colour is rippled over the warm white ground-work, and given form to by a few flicks and heavier brushings which unite the two processes. Flower and pendant which light up cheek and hair, and the metallic frippery of the bull-fighter, are added with a heavier material and a keener touch. *La Gloria* has found an appropriate home in the National Gallery of Scotland.

For long Phillip's health had been fragile, and now there remained to him only a year or two of precarious life. Nevertheless, the two Academy exhibitions to which he was still able to contribute, contained each a picture embodying his finest qualities. The first of these, *The Early Career of Murillo*, was his largest and most ambitious, whilst *A Chat round the Brasero*,* of 1866, showed that to the end there was no failure either of hand or eye. The canvas is small compared with those of the two preceding years, and the subject has no claim to rank in importance with either. But the humorous theme—a priest retailing some bit of piquant scandal to a company of women and girls—is sufficient for the artist's needs, as it would have sufficed Jan Steen, who might have used it in a more questionable manner. Here it simply gives point to one of those flower-like arrangements of shawl, skirt, and bodice, through which Phillip can appeal so strongly to the æsthetic sense. A something more even of racy fluency belongs to the finished sketch † for this picture.

Interspersed with those productions of his later years come numerous portraits, only a few of which were seen at

* At the Guildhall.

† In the possession of Mrs. Keiller, London.

A CHAT ROUND THE BRASERO

the Royal Academy. Amongst the best are the small three-quarter lengths of *Mr. W. B. Johnstone, R.S.A.*,* and his wife,* and the life-size portrait of the former.† The pair were exhibited at the Scottish Academy is 1862; the other is signed 1865. In the earlier portrait, Mr. Johnstone, seated by a writing-table, turns with careless action towards the light, leaning an elbow on the near arm of his easy chair. The flesh, rich and juicy in colour, is wrought with a more intimate modelling and discrimination of the niceties of character than usual, and with the happiest result. The hazel eye, the swarthy cheek, the lank grizzled hair, and the loosely-knit figure, recall the man with a strange vividness across the lapse of years. *Mrs. Johnstone* shows a different manner. Phillip's brush adapts itself to his fair-complexioned, smooth-skinned subject, and the sweet, placid features are modelled with a broader, softer touch. The life-sized bust of *Mr. Johnstone* is a somewhat more brusque, though no less characteristic, presentment of the man. This time he is seen almost in profile, with the light falling full on cheek and temple Painted on a rougher ground, the consequent heavier loading fails here and there to indicate the finer modulation of the parts, yet the portrait is almost startling in its realism and vitality. The light seems positively to glister on the high-toned flesh of brow and temple; and the more weathered skin drawn tightly over the jaw, the hair now whiter and more sparse, and the goat-like beard are expressed with a master hand. The three-quarter length of *Miss Caird*,‡ painted during his last working year, taken in

* In the National Gallery of Scotland.

† The property of the Royal Scottish Academy.

‡ In the possession of Mrs. Glen, Greenock.

connection with those already mentioned, shows what Phillip might have accomplished had he devoted himself to portraiture. It is quite unlike the others. The young lady—a blonde—is seen full face, seated on a wayside bank with dark foliage and a glimpse of sky and landscape for background. The pose, the dress of light blue and the pink quilted petticoat, bring suggestions of both Reynolds and Gainsborough. But the painting is unlike that of either; it is John Phillip dealing with a colour-scheme the very antipodes of those to which his Spanish work had accustomed him. That imports little to the true artist, such changes only give zest to his efforts. Consequently it is not surprising that the hand which had depicted with such mastery the olive cheek and strongly contrasted draperies of Andalusia should be equally successful with the blue and blonde and pink of the north. Deprived of the sunlight and the more picturesque costume of Spain, he finds an equally artistic scheme of colour and chiaroscuro in the less marked oppositions and more lightsome harmonies that here lie to his hand. The technical qualities are those of the pictures already described; the painting of a tan-coloured terrier on the lady's knee—a few dark strokes over a lighter transparent ground—is a miracle of the brush. During the last year of his life Phillip paid a visit to Italy, and one of the three pictures sent by his executors to the Royal Academy of 1867—*Antonia*—was painted whilst on this long-deferred pilgrimage to the artist's Mecca. He died on February 27, 1867, at the age of forty-nine.

In a fine appreciation of the painter, written nearly twenty years ago, Sir Walter Armstrong says: "For the moment Phillip's art is in some degree out of fashion. It is too simple, too direct, too blissfully content in its appeal

to sense, to please those who like a picture to be a little mysterious. . . . And so, to a generation which falls down and worships Rossetti and Burne Jones, and Watts and Holman Hunt, his pictures seem a little unexciting." It is to be feared that, though the worship of some of these may not be so ardent as it was, the art of John Phillip is not yet appreciated at its true value. This seems strange, considering the enthusiasm with which his later pictures were hailed both by his brother artists and by the public. It brought him the two steps of academic honour in quick succession, the happy title "Phillip of Spain," said to have been first conferred by Queen Victoria, and a golden harvest he esteemed less. But all through the last forty years of the nineteenth century, that love of the mysterious, the complex, the recondite, to which the author of "Scottish Painters" alludes, went on increasingly. In literature, the poems and sonnets and novels of various favourite authors were so worded as to recall the phrase attributed to Talleyrand that "language was given to man to enable him to conceal his thoughts." There was, of course, its analogue in painting both as regards subject and execution. Those figures whose weary gestures and lack-lustre eyes meant unutterable things to the frequenters of London galleries during the later seventies and eighties, were equalled only by a bizarrerie of technique which exercised the ingenuity of a public not averse to the mild excitement of puzzling out its *raison d'être*. The frame even became a matter of importance, and, at times, the picture invaded it. In other cases, the subject was hidden away altogether under slushings of tone and quality, and it was especially on these last that the advanced connoisseur expatiated to his heart's content. Mystery, no doubt, has its value in

Art, but it can easily be overdone. Of that sentiment, tender or wistful or pensive, which lends such charm to *Autumn Leaves*, *The Return of the Dove*, and *The Huguenot*, there is no trace in the works of Phillip, either Scottish or Spanish. And of the searching intimacy of technique through which alone the finer shades of expression are attainable there is too little. Nay, it must be conceded that in much of the work of his earlier Spanish period there is a want of distinction both in treatment and execution that surprises one when compared with the work of a few years later. But an artist's measure is his best work, and in Phillip's case there is enough of the higher quality to place him in the front rank of British painters. It is matter of regret, no doubt, that the prodigious activity of his latest years prevented his producing more pictures of the type of *La Gloria*, where the most subtle shades of expression and emotion give an added grace to the spontaneity of the handling. *El Cigarillo*, *Faith*, and *The Wine Drinkers* of his best period show what such a technique, at once strong and tender, was capable of. But not a few of his last works—fifty-six half-finished pictures were taken from his studio after his death—give the impression of one who knew that his time was short, and that it behoved him to set down as much as possible of the subjects that were crowding his brain.

In discussing Phillip's place as a colourist, he has been compared and contrasted with Rossetti and Burne Jones. But with these the term carries a different meaning. They are colourists in the sense that allies the painter's art with that of the glass-stainer and the illuminator. Phillip's colour, on the other hand, is inseparable from his play of brush; for all the finer transitions that give value to his

more positive hues are obtained by artifices infinitely more subtle than the laboured and complex harmonisations of the Pre-Raphaelite and Neo-Pre-Raphaelite. With the Scottish master, as with all great brushmen, the gradation is a thing impalpable, that would shift with the turning of face or limb ; in a word, his colour is bound up with incidence of light, and a handling that leaves no sense of labour. It may be that, analysed, his tints are commonplace—so are those of Rubens—but out of such, through that alchemy of brain and hand which constitutes the craft of painting, the master colourists have obtained their most splendid results. For here, again, as in the vast compositions of the "Leo Belgicus" and Tintoretto, there is the flying hand which seems everywhere at once, evoking from the canvas tones strong or tender, brilliant or negative, as occasion requires. And surely, in a school that has suffered from the premature decay of so many of its best productions, it is something to be thankful for that Phillip evolved a method which, whilst it conserved all that was best in its traditions, restored to it on a wider field and in a more brilliant key, the qualities of virility and permanence with which Raeburn had endowed it sixty years earlier. The pity of it is that his work ended ere it was well begun. In Duncan, Scott, Simson, and others of later date, the Scottish school has had to mourn many lives unfulfilled, but never a sorer loss than when the shears of Fate cut short the career of "Phillip of Spain."

Of the many Scottish artists who have practised history painting, Drummond is the one who has clung most faithfully to the delineation of the past of his own country, and especially of its capital. Only once during forty-three years does the entry *A Portrait* occur in the Scottish

Academy catalogues, and in 1843, when he contributed *A Landscape*, he is careful to enter it as by James Drummond, *amateur*. During that long period, fully three-fourths of his more important subjects relate to Edinburgh and its immediate vicinity. From first to last the titles of his pictures show how thoroughly he was steeped in the history and antiquarian lore of the country and city of his birth. To the latter he rendered the additional service of preserving in a series of ninety-five drawings, now in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, a record of many interesting localities and buildings since swept away, or remodelled out of all recognition by municipal authorities and Improvement Trusts.

Drummond's elaborate compositions are more interesting from the antiquarian and historical than from the æsthetic point of view. All that an intimate acquaintance with the circumstances and spirit of the time and accuracy of setting and detail could compass was set forth in those stirring incidents of national history: but the impression left is far from adequate to the labour and industry expended. As a rule, his work has little to recommend it to the craftsman. Based on the orthodox Scottish manner, he lacks that sense of colour and conduct of the brush, which, in the hands of its abler exponents, renders the method so interesting. In such pictures as *Montrose* and *Mary, Queen of Scots*—both at the Mound—the careful modelling and laboured character of the numerous heads furnish but another instance of how impossible the finer shades of expression are to an inadequate technique, and how dependent are movement and vivacity on a light hand and suggestive touch. The *Montrose* offends against every artistic and æsthetic principle in its melodrama, its con-

THE PORTEOUS MOB

fusion of scale, and clumsy drawing of men and horses—in the unpleasant juxtaposition of colours and the incoherence of its lightsome setting with the blackness and density below. It is pleasant to turn from such a picture to the simpler *James I. of Scotland sees his future Queen*, the artist's diploma work, where the royal captive, seated at a half-open window, beholds, to quote his own words—

> "The fairest and the freshest younge flower
> That ever I saw methought before that hour."

Here the scheme of light and shade is broad, effective, and so disposed as to assist and enhance the central motive. The colour quality is not above the usual—the face, seen in profile, looks as if carved out of ivory—but it avoids the harsh juxtapositions of the *Montrose*, and in the hangings and various accessories Drummond here adds to his precision and skill of detail, something of a larger and more virile manipulation. The picture is dated 1851. Four years later, in *The Porteous Mob*, the painter is seen at his best, for he brings before us with something of the same vividness the sudden midnight tragedy described in the opening chapters of "The Heart of Midlothian." The scene is viewed from the Cowgate near its abutment on the Grassmarket, and the moment is that when the rioters, emerging from the West Bow, carry Porteous towards the dyester's pole, where their purpose was carried out. The street and the picturesque tenements on either hand teem with life. Various of the incidents which marked the occasion are depicted in the foreground, and other likely touches have been added. There is much spirit and a finer sense of movement than usual in the rendering of some of these. Nor does this tumultuous foreground detract

from the main interest, which lies in the open space beyond. Rather it supplies at once a foil and a much-needed distraction from a scene which would have been too painful had its horrors been insisted on. With a true dramatic instinct Drummond has only hinted at the consummation of the tragedy in a few figures seen against, or dimly illuminated by, the murky glow of the torches. But these figures of the victim and his bearers, those who hurry on the preparations about the extemporised gibbet, and the man whose commanding gesture is silhouetted against the light, dominate the canvas. One hardly looks for colour and atmosphere any more than for mastery of the brush in Drummond's pictures, but here the luminous sky, the visionary bulk of the castle, and the quaint house fronts and gables rising from the tawdry to the serener light, are painted with a truly sympathetic brush.

CHAPTER XV

LATER LANDSCAPE

In connection with the work of Ewbank and Fenwick, reference was made to the number of North of England painters who had identified themselves with Scottish art. Of these Bough was the ablest. A native of Carlisle, he was early placed in the office of a local lawyer, but a strong natural bent soon led to his substituting the brush for the quill. After a rather erratic commencement, during which he spent some time both in London and Manchester, he came to Glasgow, whilst still a young man, and ultimately to the Scottish capital, where the best years of his working life were spent.

Bough's name is still a household word, not in Edinburgh only, but throughout Scotland. Of a keen intellect, he was able to master without difficulty whatever he set his mind to, and his popularity is not due to his skill as a painter merely. He was well read in a wide range of subjects, he sang a good song, could perform with skill on various instruments, and even in his later days, when his proportions were somewhat elephantine, he would tread a measure with the lightness and grace of a "young Lochinvar." He fraternised with all sorts and conditions of men, and was popular with most, a terror only to the stand-off and upsetting. He was a prince of romancers;

many and wondrous were the stories he told of his adventures when on sketching expeditions and the parts he played therein. A veritable Bohemian, in whom the contrary qualities of human nature were more on the surface than with most, his kindly and charitable deeds were many, and his scathing words—not always deserved—by no means few. In all he did he was very much alive, and this vitality lies at the back of what is best in his art.

His genesis is to be sought rather amongst the great English landscapists than with those who had preceded him in Scotland. With Muller and Cox especially he had well-marked affinities. Like more than one of the masters of landscape he worked for a while as a scene-painter, so acquiring the facility that marked his after-development. First in Manchester, and later in Glasgow, he thus supported himself, sketching diligently from nature during his leisure hours. In Scotland his earliest works were associated with St. Mungo's city and neighbourhood, and with the estuary of the Clyde. At first these had something of the convention of the painters of the earlier part of the century, but ere long they show a perception of aspects of light and atmosphere little considered in our native school before that time. An agile hand, a quick eye, and an instinct for composition, with the abounding physical energy of the man, carried him fast and far during the first ten years of his professional life.

In 1855 he removed to Edinburgh, and in the following year he was elected an Associate of the Academy. Even before he left Glasgow he had been recognised as a coming man, and during his early years in the capital his exhibits at the Academy brought him a great reputation. His advent was a new strength to the landscape-painters of that institution, which by this time had survived its early

troubles. Amongst them was one whose name was to become intimately associated with his own—a kindred spirit, some half-dozen years his junior, Alexander Fraser. Those acquainted with the art life of Edinburgh during the later fifties and earlier sixties will remember how frequently the names were bracketed. Younger brethren of the brush spoke of "Bough and Fraser" as if there was some closer bond of union than membership of the same craft. Equally endowed by nature, they excelled in different qualities, and, as frequently happens when one of a pair is the complement of the other, their association had the best results; for no works of either excel those produced whilst they worked together amongst the oaks of Cadzow or on the island of Inchcolm. Frasers of this period have something of the spontaneous composition of his senior, and the Boughs partake of the colour-quality of the younger artist.

His works are very numerous, the thirty years of his professional life having been marked by continuous activity. Dramatic rather than emotional, his best pictures were struck off at a white heat. Stories almost incredible are told of the speed at which he worked. A clean canvas would be taken to his studio in the morning, and before night it was consigned, a finished picture, to some purchaser or forwarded to an exhibition. Of some landscape work of more recent times this might not seem much to say, but Bough's pictures were crowded with detail and the keenest observation of natural effects. Within the four corners of *his* frames there was seldom any space to let. He painted all sorts of subjects within the domain of landscape, but he is never happier than when he deals with the hurry and bustle of the crowded wharves and quays of great seaports. *The Port of London** and *The*

* Property of Mrs. Carmichael, Greenock.

Tower of London,* exhibited in 1857 and 1866 respectively, are fine examples, as are also the various versions of *The Broomielaw* of 1861–66.

Both shores of the Forth were his familiar sketching-grounds in the immediate neighbourhood, whilst Holy Island and the Solway, on the east and west border-line, were also much frequented. Cadzow and his native Cumberland supplied many of his most successful inland subjects, but it is hard to find a district in Scotland or the northern counties of England which Bough has not visited and illustrated. The heaths and commons of the farther south and the picturesque canals of the Midlands were also laid under contribution ; and, though he was never much abroad, the quaint harbours of the neighbouring French coast also furnished material for his brush.

His finest pictures belong to the later fifties and to the decade 60–70. During these years, in the prime of his manhood, and often with the stimulating influence of Fraser at his elbow, were produced the pictures already adverted to and a host of others too numerous to mention. A visitor to his studio in later years was surprised to see him sign a little bit he had just finished, "Sam Bough, 1857," but the explanation was immediately forthcoming, "You know, that's said to be my best period!" From the date of his coming to Edinburgh his popularity never waned, and throughout the length and breadth of Scotland his work found a ready sale. His art was never for the select few. Any one who had an eye at all for his outward surroundings could recognise the drama of natural effects, whether of sunshine or storm, as depicted in his vivid and sparkling transcripts.

* In the possession of William McEwen, Esq., London.

An analysis of some good example may help us to understand an art which commended itself to so wide a public. One of *The Broomielaws*, seen lately at the Glasgow Arts Club, will suffice. The canvas, signed 1861, is small, but the methods are characteristic of many larger pictures of the same nature. The subject is the view from the Jamaica Street Bridge looking westward from its parapet, before the piers and girders of the Caledonian Railway Company had thrust themselves between bridge and quay. It is towards sundown, a faint yellowish haze suffuses everything. From the right foreground the quay, and the street facing it, recede in a finely-felt perspective towards the centre of the picture, where a forest of masts, spars, and sails indicates the commerce of a great seaport. On the left, more shipping, and, in the fairway between, a tug conveying a string of barges down stream. There is life and movement everywhere, on bustling quay, crowded passenger-boats, and river surface agitated by the paddles of the receding tug. The very sun seems to quiver and palpitate as it nears the warm vapours of the river.

On examination the simplicity of the means is surprising. Over a warm, yellowish ground, rather lower-toned than the sky above, the scene has been wrought in an almost monochromatic scheme of warm greys, stronger as it nears the spectator and directly under the sun. Only in the immediate foreground is there anything like positive colour, in the costumes of the passengers on board the nearest boat, the pennon at its bow, and, already deadened by intervening atmosphere, the red paddle of that beyond. The subject is realised by justness of tone, an absolute knowledge of the forms of the

various objects and surfaces represented, and a skill of craft expressing the same with swiftness and precision. In the buildings to the right, for example, the architectural detail of façade and tower is rendered with a few upright and parallel brushings, faint but precise. However delicate the relation of tone, the form, where emphasised, is given with unwavering edge, like a wash in a Turner drawing. Indeed, his free use of turpentine imparts something of a water-colour treatment to the finest of Bough's oils, the superimposed brushings having more of the flatness of tempera and the incisive contour given by the camel hair than is usually associated with the stronger material. The sun and the warm gradations of the surrounding sky are wrought in a full fat body of paint, which gets thinner and finer in surface as it passes into the half-tones, whilst, underneath, the lights on the troubled water and all smooth or polished objects which flash back the sun's rays with varying degrees of intensity, are expressed in a juicy impasto and with a touch at once brisk and admirably descriptive. The colour is not of the finest, having something of the quality associated with scene painting; but here, as often in such subjects, one forgets it in the delightful vivacity of the handling. R. L. Stevenson said of Bough's painting that it was "an act of dashing conduct, like the capture of a fort in war." Like the rattle of beaten drums, it may not touch the emotions, but it stirs the blood.

A more important version of the same subject—*The Broomielaw from the Bridge: "Let Glasgow Flourish"*—was shown at the Glasgow Institute in 1866. There, and at the Scottish Academy's exhibitions, Bough's exhibits were often limited only by the number allowed.

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The subjects are drawn from many different localities, and deal with every variety of atmospheric effect: *The Bass Rock in a Storm; Edinburgh from the Canal; The Drove at Sunrise; Cattle Crossing the Solway; Kirkwall Harbour; The Rocket-cart—Isle of Wight.* But even the more important of them are too numerous to recapitulate. Often the smaller canvases were of the finer quality, and one characteristic, large and small had in common, the ease and appropriateness with which he managed the introduction of figures. Whether he is dealing with land or sea, with populous city or rural seclusion, his figures, single or grouped, are not only right as regards the composition of the picture, they are in the attitude or action that accords with their occupation, or the want of it.

As might be inferred from what has been said, Bough was a master of water-colour, and by many his work in that medium is regarded as his best. Certainly its technique seems to suit his talent. It is of his procedure in this department that Stevenson further says, "It was a sight to see him attack a sketch, peering boldly through his spectacles, and, with somewhat tremulous fingers, flooding the page with colour; for a moment it was an indescribable hurly-burly, and then chaos would become ordered, and you would see a speaking transcript." In such sketches a facile hand and unrivalled power of drawing gave him a rare command over the ever-shifting panorama of sky and cloudland, whilst his dramatic instinct enabled him swiftly to seize the arrangement and composition most appropriate for the subject under treatment. He worked mostly with the pure wash; but body-colour is used in points and sometimes floated into the

broader tints. He may not attain to Cox's purity of colour; but in other directions he outstrips his great predecessor. On one occasion, at an exhibition where his work had been placed near that of Cox, he was heard remarking, with a self-satisfied chuckle, "Aye, Davie, lad, that settles the matter between you and me."

Unfortunately for his reputation his work is of very unequal merit. Both in oils and in water-colour, but especially in the former, he often falls sadly below the high standard here claimed for him. In many of his larger oil pictures the scenic element asserts itself strongly both in the technique and in a somewhat melodramatic treatment; the colour gets cold and chalky, harsh and jarring notes obtrude themselves, and the conventions of his method are minus the deftness so remarkable in the finer examples. This is the lot of most great producers; but in Bough's case a sufficient number of works in either medium will stand comparison with all but the one or two greatest landscapists of the century.

Fraser's name appears in the Scottish Academy's catalogues three years before Bough's. His first picture, in 1846, is entitled *Gipsy Girl in Prison*. In 1847 he exhibits *A Cottage Interior*; but in the years immediately following, he tends more and more towards landscape, and, after 1852, he is known as a landscape painter. During the fifties he worked with Bough in the neighbourhood of Hamilton, and it was here that their influence on each other commenced. Though later he painted a good deal in the Highlands, Fraser took more kindly to some aspects of Lowland and English scenery. Across the border, Warwickshire and Surrey, were his favourite sketching-grounds, and to these districts belong some of

his best works. For a year or two during the sixties he settled in London; and it is curious that, whilst various Scottish landscapists found abundant encouragement there, Fraser's works made no impression, and it is only now that they are beginning to be appreciated in the English market.

Fraser lacked some of the qualities which gave popularity to the work of his rival. He was not a composer, as Bough was, and, translated into black and white, the difference is felt immediately. It follows, almost as a matter of course, that he appeals to a smaller public; but, north of the Tweed, at least, he has a great reputation, and amongst connoisseurs no pictures are more sought after. For, in lieu of what he wants, he has qualities more valued amongst the initiated. He is the colourist always, in so far as quality of pigment is concerned; and as most painters regard colour as the crowning achievement of their art, this is sufficient to confer distinction. Fraser was the first of our landscapists who painted his pictures direct from nature, and his work has the merits, if also some of the defects, of a practice which, so far as Scotland is concerned, he inaugurated. English painters were adopting the same method, though there the greater number of those who carried to the fields and hedgerows the identical canvases to be exhibited were painters of figure, or mixed landscape and figure subjects. The mid-century naturalistic movement was in its earlier stages, and the impassioned realism of Millais and Hunt extended to the smallest detail of their landscape backgrounds. Fraser has nothing in common with these either in aim or treatment. But the movement affected more than the Pre-Raphaelites. Many who did not share the convictions

of the Brethren were seeking to rid themselves of old conventions, and in painters like Hook and Oakes one finds something akin to the first of our Scottish naturalists. Truth to nature was his one aim, and though truth is many-sided, and all painters claim to follow it, Fraser's is a realism of a highly interesting and personal kind.

His technique is seen at its best in various of his Cadzow subjects, and in such canvases as *On the Avon* and *Amongst the Surrey Hills.* The latter, painted about '66–'67, represents a wide expanse of country viewed from the undulating slopes of a foreground where newly-felled timber mingles with tree and scrub. Towards the left a wain with white and brown horses, tandem fashion, is being loaded with faggots, amongst which figures are at work. Such a scene, under a grey afternoon of late autumn, with its hints of veiled sunlights on the rounded slopes of the more distant country, was an ideal one for Frazer. The foreground, with its wealth of colour in foliage, recumbent beech bole, and bracken, is rendered with an extraordinary vigour. The eye is nowhere repelled by earthy pigment or clotted impasto, but rests with delight on a substratum which the ever varying umbers and ambers save from monotony. Over this the detail of form and the local colour are wrought in a full, juicy material, and with a running hand characteristic of the artist's style. For Fraser's naturalism never finds expression in that verisimilitude sought after by the Pre-Raphaelites; rather he uses a sleight of hand whereby a method of his own does duty for their more laborious processes.

Nowhere is this better seen than in the treatment of figure, or figure and animal groups, with which the Scottish painter varies his foregrounds. It was the practice of

AMONGST THE SURREY HILLS

some Dutch landscapists to relegate such adjuncts to painters in those *genres;* thus we know Ruisdael and Hobbema both employed Wouverman, Van de Velde, and Berghem in this way. As might be expected, such figures are touched with a deftness which leaves nothing to be desired. Yet the result is far from satisfactory. Not only, by their placing, do they often conflict with the sentiment of the picture, but, being more fully realised than their surroundings, a discord is set up which detracts from the unity of the impression. Again, in more recent times, and as the result of a misplaced naturalism, one has seen in pictures, the main interest of which is landscape, figures exquisitely detailed, but which fail of their purpose, which is to indicate, as lightly as may be, some appropriate human interest, and to touch the æsthetic sense by the introduction of those more positive points of colour and light for which they give opportunity. Fraser has understood all this better than most; and his figures, both in their placing and rendering, are of a piece with their surroundings. In his more highly-finished compositions, *The Avon* for example, the haymakers at rest in the foreground are treated with the same completion—but no more—as the haycocks and swathes of hay about them, whilst in *Amongst the Surrey Hills* the faggot wain and its attendants partake of the freer handling which characterises the picture throughout. In both, the opportunities for giving variety to the grey greens of summer and the russets of autumn by glints of light on parti-coloured draperies, and on the whites and browns of the animals, are used with rare skill. Even in the completion of *The Avon* group there is no sense of labour, the touch is free, and the pigment limpid as in the surroundings; a keener contour

and a more careful discrimination of the various planes and surfaces are observable, but none of the tightness of over finish. And in his more loosely handled pictures, the figures, though they suit their environment, never sink to the clumsiness which some modern painters affect.

Like most who are weak in the composer's faculty, Fraser is seen at his best in pictures of moderate dimensions ; and in some of his smaller Cadzow subjects * and others, such as *Tillietudlem*,† *Lanercost*,‡ and a *Canal Scene* with a small sloop passing through a lock, one forgets his defects in the rare perfection of his qualities. In the last-named, and in various others, something of Bough's gift has communicated itself to his brother artist: to his own luscious colour and high finish he adds a sense of arrangement and composition, and also dares effects seldom attempted in the larger pictures. In some of his still-life studies—dead birds, birds'-nests, and interiors from Holyrood and Barncleuth—his technique is surprisingly fine, He and Bough have their points in common as well as their contrasts, their work being alike in its want of the emotional element. One does not dream over a Fraser any more than over a Bough. But in an art where, as Josef Israels has it, the *how* is more than the *what*, one finds enough to admire in Fraser's strongly individual realism and technique.

Midway between the last two as regards date, and in striking contrast to their modernity, comes J. C. Wintour. Beginning like Fraser with figure-subjects, he was led by the same influences to the practice of landscape. An

* One of the *Best*, *Bark-Peeling*, is in the possession of T. Hall Cooper, Esq., Edinburgh.

† In the possession of Andrew Carnegie, Esq.

‡ In the possession of Alexander F. Roberts, Esq.

expedition to Perthshire in 1850 may be said to have finally determined his choice. Titles like *Prospero and Caliban*, and *A Flower Girl*, give place to landscapes, though in some of these, *Minnow Fishers*, *Young Anglers*, &c., the figures form an important adjunct of the composition. In one, *At the Spring*,* painted towards the close of his life, a fair-haired little girl with water cans and attendant collie furnishes the chief interest.

There was a time when it seemed as if Wintour's art was to partake more largely of the modern spirit. A small picture, *The Woodland Glade*,† which must date from the early fifties, is elaborate in detail, with the notable difference that the full greens of summer are rendered with no trace of the crudity which usually mars such conscientious studies of the professed realists. In this bit of cool greenery, there is in stem and bough, in foliage and mossy stone, a sensitiveness to the form and an apprehension of the densities and surfaces of things, which are sorely missed in his later and more ambitious efforts. It was, indeed, the great defect of Wintour's talent that he was never able to engraft these delightful qualities on the idealistic compositions to which his maturer life was devoted. For awhile, and especially in some of his Warwickshire pictures, there is a partial amalgamation. In various of these, which one remembers, he attains to a fine massing and balance of parts, with at least a less obvious departure from natural colour and conditions of light than in his romantic and often rather fantastic conceptions of Highland pass or Border castle. In *Near*

* In the possession of J. J. Roberts, Esq.

† In the possession of James Brechin, Esq., Edinburgh.

Winchburgh, *Guy's Cliff—Warwick*, and a small picture, *The Village Well*,* the realistic strives with more or less of success to unite itself with the traditional; but as time goes on the former shrinks, the latter grows. The larger construction and finer balance of the great classicists attract him more and more, and, unfortunately, he seems unable to carry through his schemes without falling back on the conventional tones on which their pictures were mostly based. Every now and then, like his forerunner Thomson, he seems about to emerge into the light, but as often, like him, he shrinks back to the time-honoured varnishy browns, which were always safe, and not unpleasant to look on. One forgives the amateur more readily than the painter who lived far into a later era. In Thomson's day Sir George Beaumont was an authority, but ere Wintour reached his prime the "brown tree" had long been discarded.

The Scottish artist's technique is that which the school inherited from the Flemings, and in his use of varnishy umbers he pushes the method to its extreme, with the result that his work has all the flimsiness which is its besetting fault. His processes are much the same as those of Sir David Wilkie when, fifty years earlier, he made those delightful sketches for his crowded figure subjects which so charmed Eugène Delacroix. The evolution of the design from an umber ground by the dexterous application of lighter and darker sympathetic colours, and the dainty pencilling of so sure a hand, has a fascination that no other method could give, it so admirably fulfils the purpose of a sketch. But it no longer suffices when presented to us in what purport to be fully thought out and completed com-

* In the possession of Archibald Smith, Esq., Edinburgh.

positions. Especially when applied to landscape, its cruder forms are inadequate; for the want of the pervading influence of light is more keenly felt in the open, and this is just the quality to which the umber ground does not readily lend itself. After his earlier middle period and the passing away of the naturalistic impulse, Wintour fell back on a variation of the old method. In the slighter early work the umber scheme is accepted, as in Wilkie's sketches, for the suggestiveness with which it is used, and it often comes wonderfully near the true tones of nature, as in *Old Struan Bridge** and *Autumn on the Ail Water*.* It is when a ruddier brown is used as a basis and the superimposed matter gets heavier and more dense, as often in his larger works, that the convention is not so easily accepted, for the looseness of the method is attended with defects scarcely felt in the smaller canvases. The composition—on certain well-marked lines—is as fine as ever, finer in some of his latest conceptions. The foreground masses of trees on this hand or that, the winding vale or bosky woodland of the middle distance, and the escape into the farther distance, are disposed on the large lines of the masters. It is when one considers the picture more closely that a something of incoherent and flimsy obtrudes itself. The scale of the different parts is badly adjusted. One gets a little confused in attempting to follow the landscape from plane to plane; roads run nowhither; the configuration of the country is ignored; and sometimes the masses of foliage have a clogged and flattened appearance, as in the side scenes at the theatre. Figures or cattle, when introduced, add to this confusion by a vagueness of scale and relationship to their surroundings, and, generally

* In the possession of James Wilson, Esq., Edinburgh.

speaking, there is a lack of cohesion, and of the solidity and restfulness of the earth's surface. In a word, Wintour's work is deficient in backbone. Further, the season, the time of day, the thousand and one intimacies of atmospheric effect or varieties of lighting and cloud-form find little expression in his work. And the fact that, with all their incoherences, his works abound in some of the most precious qualities shows how wide the field of art is. For there is in them an element of romance which appeals to certain moods as no merely naturalistic work can.

This is nowhere better seen than in a picture of moderate size, in which a peep of blue water and a panorama of piled up hills are seen beyond a sloping park-like country. A noble group of trees rises high on the left, balanced by a broken bank with lower scrub-wood on the right. Between these and across the wooded glades of the middle distance, the eye seeks and rests with delight on the cooler hues of the more open landscape and a finely variegated summer sky. This picture, which has been called *Near Queensferry*,* is not free from the defects which mar so many of Wintour's compositions, but his finer qualities overpower them. The play and interchange of dull reds, blues, and pearly greys, in tiled roof, still water, and the partly veiled ridges of the distance, make a delicious harmony, whilst the nearer landscape, in spite of the somewhat forced shadow of the middle distance, is handled with more virility than usual, the colour being everywhere full and luscious and the touch free. A hint of humanity is given in the passing steamer, and in the church tower and buildings of some village on the farther shore. Whether it be some reminiscence of the Queen's Ferry from

* In the Possession of John Kirkhope, Esq., Edinburgh.

LANDSCAPE COMPOSITION—NEAR QUEENSFERRY
By J. C. Wintour, A.R.S.A.

the grounds of Dalmeny or Hopetoun, or a work of pure imagination, matters little. Through that woodland glade, the painter has opened a vista into the realms of fancy and romance. These finer qualities of the artist are also seen in two small moonlights, *On the Garry** and *Blairlogie*.† Here the conditions have compelled a departure from the tones in which Wintour is so apt to run riot. Dense greens and varnishy browns give place to a gamut of warm greys, everywhere full of suggestions of colour, and both in the wooded vale of the Garry, and in the still waters and vague reaches of level country around the castle of Blairlogie, much of the true aspect, as well as of the glamour of moonlight, has been caught. All through his career, Wintour's work in oil is accompanied by a series of water-colour drawings, mostly slight, but of delightful spontaneity.

John Milne Donald, a west country artist some years the senior of the two last-named, was little known in Edinburgh till towards the close of his career. The inheritor of the same traditions, the realistic movement caught him not in the ardour of early manhood, as it did Fraser and Wintour, and he seems to have yielded slowly to the influence. His work till near the middle fifties retains much of the old conventions which he uses in rather an undistinguished way. But from that time onward, possibly through association with Bough, who was then resident in the west, a change is observable. It does not take quite the same form as with his juniors. The awakening is to the charm and variety of natural lighting rather than to elaboration of detail. Year by year his work was growing

† In the possession of Walter Bain, Esq., Ayr.

‡ In the possession of Archibald Smith, Esq., Edinburgh.

in the vitality which comes of a settled and strongly held conviction; for with the new outlook on nature he attained something of Bough's racy and vigorous handling. But the new impulse, which came to him after he had travelled long on the old road, was cut short all too soon by failure of health and derangement of mental faculties a year or two before his death in 1866.

A small picture in the possession of the writer, where a thatched *biggin* stands on a rough shore of bent and shingle with serrated hills seen across an expanse of sea, epitomises the mannerisms of his first twelve or fourteen years. The darker parts, rubbed in with a transparent brown—unpleasantly hot—the lights and half-tones, and the neutral colours of herbage, sea, and hills, of a material only slightly heavier, with the loaded yellow cumuli opposed to a blue of poor quality, are all characteristic; as is the deft though mannered way in which they are used. *The Coming Storm—Arran** exhibits the same methods in a dramatic arrangement of rough heathy foreground, shadowed middle distance and rugged hills half obliterated by rising storm cloud. A gleam of water, a touch of smoke, and the man hurrying along a road which runs diagonally into the picture, give point to the scene. One or two small canvases show the artist's qualities with less of his mannerism. *A Storm at Fairlie** and *Autumn Afternoon*† are sympathetic renderings of widely different aspects of nature; the latter delicious in its portrayal of the still sunlight of the fall of the year. Two pictures, a larger and a smaller, of a bend on a river over-arched with autumnal foliage haunt the recollection of

* In the collection of Joseph Agnew, Esq., Glasgow.

† In the collection of Joseph Henderson, Esq., Glasgow.

IN CAMPSIE GLEN

By John Milne Donald

the writer. One or two masted boats or barges, introduced with great spirit, impart a canal-like aspect to the scene. The smaller canvas especially showed Bough's influence, with a more limpid quality than the Cumbrian usually attained in his oil painting. The placing and painting of the boats had a still closer affinity to the dexterous handcraft of that versatile painter, so much so that the owner used to doubt whether they were not the actual work of Bough. The two would be much together about that time and might set their hand to each other's work, as is not unusual with brethren of the craft. Bough, it is known, had a high admiration for his friend's work, and, it is said, used to declare that, had he lived, the Glasgow artist might have excelled him—a large admission, for Bough never underrated his own work.

Towards his later years Milne Donald, who never wandered far in search of subjects, worked within even narrower limits. Campsie Glen, Loch Eck, Innellan, and the shores of the Clyde, furnishing most of his subjects. In some of these the old mannerisms mingle with the new qualities, the shadows are flimsy, and the browns of which they are composed too positive; he handles the foliage more freely, but, in stream, and boulder and shingle, wherever, indeed, he attempts a more searching realism, the touch is somewhat heavy. In others again presumably the later—the painting is strong and full, and he is able to adapt his brush to the new truths he is assimilating. No Scottish landscapist remained more faithful, not to his country merely, but to that well-marked division of it where the Highland and Lowland shires slope steeply or gently to the sea-lochs and blue waters of the Clyde. And his works reflect their *locale* in no vague or uncertain

way. They are redolent of the west, whether he deals with the undulating bosky country adjoining the Highland border, the shingly shores of the Firth, or the bolder scenery of Argyle and Arran. Nothing could well be farther from the classic lines on which Wintour worked; Milne Donald weaves no ideal schemes out of elements which might well have lent themselves to it, but his best pictures, without being slavishly realistic, have that "local colour" which is the abiding gift of the middle-century movement to landscape art.

Contemporary with these, James Cassie and Waller H. Paton practised the marine and inland branches of landscape. Neither takes a very high place—their *rôle* was too restricted—but each had a great popularity within his *métier*. The coast scenery of the former cannot be said to owe much to the earlier marine painters, either Scottish or English, and, as applied to him, the term has a different significance. He views the sea more as a landsman than as one acquainted with reefing, close-hauling, and "the beauty and mystery of the ships," which are the very *raison d'etre* of the works of such as Wilson and Stanfield. He seems, indeed, to have drifted into the class of subjects by which he is best known comparatively late in his practice. Earlier he painted portrait, landscape, and *genre* in Aberdeen, of which district he was a native. A dweller on the coast, the two latter branches would quite naturally lead to his ultimate preference for the sea. In *Mussel Gatherers, Low Water*, and such like subjects, exhibited during the sixties, the sea and shore were used as a background for the figures, but, as time went on, the figure interest dropped out, or was used as a mere accessory. As a painter of the sea his range

was limited, its placid aspects only having much recognition from him. Morning or evening effects, where rising or setting sun reflects on the still waters, or the sea vapours veil lightly the distant headland, were favourite themes. Or again, the deepening twilight reveals the flash of pharos or lightship, or a white or yellow moon silvers or gilds the mottled clouds, and the darker but still smooth surface of the sea. Now and again, there is the azure of noonday, when, with a touch of north in the wind, sail, and tower, and sea birds gleam white against the blue, but the drama of storm and storm cloud never, or almost never. His technique has nothing of the traditional about it. Neither the brown transparencies, the limpid or glutinous material, nor the keen edge and racy handling of his predecessors are to be found in his dainty but somewhat soft and mannered brushwork. Indeed, before Cassie took to the sea, a new order was taking the place of the old. A great awakening of landscape painting had taken place in France and Holland, in which latter country Roelofs and Mollinger, the precursors of modern Dutch landscape, were working on new lines. Aberdeen was early in touch with this movement both through personal contact and the acquisition of examples of those pioneers by local collectors. The new aims and methods of the Dutchmen are distinctly felt in Cassie's work, though he never attained to much virility in the use of them.

The name of Waller H. Paton is too much associated with a class of his pictures in which elaborately wrought Highland scenery was set against glowing twilight skies. In these the warm browns of the foreground and middle distance are not very happily related to the blue and

purple of distant mountain ranges and the saffron or rosy hues of sky and cloudland. The highly wrought minutiæ of the nearer portions, and especially the fretwork of brown leafage when trees are brought against the light, have much to do with this. But Paton has done better things. Many of his water-colour vignettes—jottings made on the spot or recollections of effects on continental river or in Highland strath—have much charm. One of Cologne, with its bridge of boats curving into the foreground, and the quaint silhouette of the old city seen against a true twilight, is quite Turneresque. A bit of undulating Highland country under an effect of afternoon sunshine, which used to be in the possession of the late G. P. Chalmers, was also an accomplished piece of work much prized by its talented owner. Mr. Paton collaborated with his brother Sir Noël in a series of designs for Aytoun's "Lays of the Scottish Cavaliers."

Various others there were who had considerable repute about the middle of the century, but the work of J. C. Brown, Arthur Perigal, and James Giles, has little individuality, nor can it be said to add to the reputation of the Scottish landscape school. Scott Lauder and Fettes Douglas in their later years produced landscapes of great excellence, but their work in that field has been considered in connection with their figure-painting.

CHAPTER XVI

MINOR PORTRAITURE AND MINIATURE PAINTING

It is impossible in a work such as this to give more than a passing glance at painters who, though not entitled to a leading place, have yet helped to give body and weight to the national art. Some of these, even when they have worked in the larger centres, have a local rather than a general reputation, and they are usually spoken of in connection with the localities to which they belonged, as Tannock of Kilmarnock, Crabb of Laurencekirk, and, more recently, James Irvine of Montrose. Tannock, a contemporary of Wilkie, exhibited portraits at the Royal Academy from 1813 to 1841. The three examples at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery give a far from favourable idea of his powers. Crabb, who belonged to a later generation—he was born in 1811—practised both portraiture and historical painting, and his work in both departments had something of originality and talent. From 1851 till 1864 he was resident in London, and thenceforth till his death in 1876 in his native town, Laurencekirk. Before that he had lived both in Edinburgh and Glasgow. His more ambitious work is little known. A picture, *Ahab in Naboth's Vineyard*, seems to have made some mark at the Royal Academy in 1851, and

an earlier work, *Fitz-James and Roderick Dhu after the Combat*, found its way to the Edinburgh International of 1886. It was spirited, if somewhat loose in execution, and forced in its scheme of lighting. His portraits often show a fine grasp of character and a handling indicative of great facility in the management of the brush, though they lack the completion of the true craftsman. A half-length of *Mrs. Cowie*,* a middle-aged lady of well-marked features and somewhat masculine type has a technique reminiscent of Hals, the dark dress, coal-scuttle bonnet, and broad rilled collar, furnishing one of those black and white schemes in which the Dutchman delights.

William Nicholson has been more than once mentioned. He was a prolific contributor to the exhibitions of the Associated Artists, and one of the leading spirits in the movement which resulted in the formation of the Scottish Academy. He belonged to Newcastle, but he spent the greater part of his professional life in Edinburgh, where he had a large practice as a portrait-painter. The work on which his reputation chiefly rests is in water-colour and of small size; but he also painted many oil portraits on the scale of life. Of the latter the National Collection contains a bust portrait of *H. W. Williams;* at Queen Street, and in the Royal Scottish Academy Library, there are similar portraits of *Sir Adam Ferguson* and *Thomas Hamilton*, the architect. The last-named is the latest, and shows an influence of Raeburn from which the others are free. In all three the character is well rendered, but the technique which suits so well the small water-colour portraits is less successful on the larger scale. Of his work in the slighter medium the galleries at the Mound and at

* In the possession of D. Crole, Esq.

Queen Street each possess an example, the former having a portrait of *George Thomson*, Burns's musical correspondent, the latter one of *Professor John Playfair*. Later than these, and better representing the artist, is a half-length profile of *William Etty*.* The fine head of the English colourist is rendered with a brush, soft or precise, as the surfaces of the flesh or accents of the features require, and the hand has lingered over them or treated them more freely with a true sense of their relative importance. Most of Nicholson's drawings are executed with a minimum of background, but here Etty's *chef d'œuvre*, *The Combat*, is delicately indicated behind the chair on which he is seated.

A full-length of *Mrs. Scott Moncrieff*,† in walking dress with large fur muff held by her side, differs in this last respect, there being an elaborately painted landscape background, showing the city with the castle and the dome of St. George's as seen from the south. The picture is probably of some years later date than the widely known portrait of the same lady by Raeburn, which was painted about 1815. Here she wears a black gown with loose jacket, and carries a red shawl over her arm. The pose is at once elegant and natural, the short waist and simple folds of the skirt suiting well her lithe and graceful figure. A wide open bonnet of dark material lends height to the stature and piquancy to the features. The expression is animated, and the large dark eyes, well marked brows, and lips slightly parted, are painted with all the care and with just a touch of the over precision of the miniature. Unlike the *Etty* and the two earlier

* In the possession of the Royal Scottish Academy.
† In the possession of Miss Bell, Edinburgh.

portraits, the *Mrs. Scott Moncrieff* is painted in pure water-colour, without crosshatching or other reinforcement by the point. In a head of *Mrs. Dugald Stewart*, lately on loan at the Queen Street Gallery, Nicholson was seen at his best. On such matters it is difficult to speak from memory, but the face full of character, in its setting of frilled white cap, left an impression of the artist's qualities which none of the others quite attain to. In his average work there is a lack of grit in the treatment of the flesh, which gives a something of effeminacy to the male portraits, and of over softness even to the female. In the *Etty* the delicate carnations and wavy brown hair impart a quite juvenile appearance to one already in middle life. This defect was less apparent in *Mrs. Dugald Stewart*.

James Irvine worked mostly in his native county, Forfarshire, and it was only the companionship of his friend Paul Chalmers that brought him much about the capital in his later years. During this last period his style was much influenced by that of the younger painter, but all through his career Irvine produced many excellent portraits, which are mostly to be seen in the towns and mansion houses of his native district. A full-length of a boy in the Dundee Albert Institute, is a good example of his earlier work, when his style and methods were based on those of Watson Gordon and his contemporaries. In 1863 there appeared at the Scottish Academy a kit-cat portrait of *George Torrance*,* in which the simple technique of Scottish mid-century portraiture was used in a manner hardly inferior to that of the leaders of the school. His later work gained much in picturesqueness through his association with Chalmers; it also lost some-

* In the possession of George Macmillan, Esq.

thing of individuality, but, on the whole, the gain was greater than the loss, the fuller body and more pictorial effects adopted more than compensating for the loss in directness of treatment. One or two studies made during these later years of the head of *Quartermaster Coull*, a naval veteran who had laid the *Shannon* alongside the *Chesapeake* in the war of 1812, show Irvine at his best, both as to rendering of character and technique.

The art of miniature painting has not been without its exponents in Scotland, though there has been no school of miniaturists in the sense of the corresponding English school which preceded the portraiture of Reynolds and Gainsborough. Robert Strange was one of the first to practise it on this side the border, but his success in the kindred and laborious art of engraving left him little time for the ivory and camel hair. The romance of his life which led him to exchange the graver's tool for the sword, and the political complications which ensued, may have had something to do with this. At all events, his miniatures are few in number; a list of ten or twelve is given in Dennistoun's narrative of his life.* John Bogle, a native of the west of Scotland, and George Sanders have been mentioned in an earlier chapter. By the former, who seems to have settled in London about 1772, there is at Queen Street a spirited little drawing of *Henry Erskine*. It is in pencil with slight washes of grey, puce, and neutral blue. There is fine characterisation in the animated features, and both in attitude and expression he has the left arm raised—there is much vivacity of rendering. The bust portrait of a fair-haired young woman by George

* "Memoirs of Sir Robert Strange and Andrew Lumisden." London, 1855.

Sanders, at the Mound, hardly justifies the reputation he enjoyed and the prices he obtained in London, where he settled about the same time as Wilkie. But that Sanders was not without very considerable ability is evident from a series of studies from pictures by Dutch and Flemish masters, executed in a crisp and dainty wash, which used to form part of the water-colour collection in the same galleries, and of which one, after Rembrandt's *Syndics*, is still placed. Of the miniature work of his contemporary, William J. Thomson, who had a great reputation in Edinburgh during the first half of the century, the writer has been unable to see anything. The public collections in Edinburgh and Glasgow are without examples, though he seems to have been a prolific worker till within a year or two of his death, which took place in 1845 at the age of seventy-four. H. W. Williams, no mean judge, in some remarks on modern Italian art,* concludes: "In portrait painting, which of them can compare with a Lawrence, a Raeburn, or a Geddes? or in miniature with a Sanders or a Thomson?" His portrait, by himself, a half-length, in the possession of the Scottish Academy, shows an elderly man of well-marked features and with iron-grey hair. The work is not of more than average merit.

Of the later exponents of miniature in Scotland, Kenneth Macleay was the ablest, and he alone continued the tradition of Nicholson in that department of the art which affords so much more scope for the artistic faculty than the ivory tablet. His work in this more ordinary branch shows also the hand of the capable craftsman, as witness

* "Travels in Italy, Greece, and the Ionian Islands." H. W. Williams. Edinburgh, 1820, page 322.

the portrait of *Mrs. James Dymock* in the Scottish Academy's library; but it is in his small water-colour portraits that Macleay's talent reaches its high water mark. The full-length of *Miss Helen Faucit* * is a fine example of the treatment appropriate for such work. There is no attempt to give the colour the force of nature, or to vie with oil portraiture. Only in the head does the artist depart from neutral tones, nor even there does he endeavour to attain the realism of the stronger material. The handsome features are modelled in warm washes, reinforced here and there in the more strongly accented parts by almost imperceptible point work with the brush. The dark hair, in ringlets, the more positive tints of the complexion, and the deep blue-grey eyes, are rendered with an easy descriptive touch. The gracefully posed figure in white flounced dress, the accessories, and the background, are executed in a technique which, though slight and admirably pictorial, never degenerates into the looseness or *chic* to which such work is peculiarly liable. This typical picture belongs to the artist's prime, bearing the date 1844. In an earlier bust portrait of his mother,† a profile, the methods are the same as in the later picture, but the effect is less pronounced and the washes and hues of the complexion and the accentuation of the features are more delicate. It differs from the work of 1844 also in the pencil line with which the neck and bust are indicated. The large and simple drawing of this contour gives an added value to the finish of the head. In male portraiture of this nature, the three-quarter length of *Park*, the sculptor, was one of the most successful. In later years,

* In the possession of the Royal Scottish Academy.

† In the possession of Mrs. Younger, Edinburgh.

when miniature painting had been seriously interfered with by photography, Macleay painted many landscapes in water-colour, but here he was out of his element, and his standing in the Scottish School of Painting is to be judged by such works as those described above.

Towards the middle of the century Robert Thorburn, a native of Dumfries, had a great success as a miniaturist amongst fashionable circles in London. He had studied under Allan at the Trustees' Academy, but beyond exhibiting a few portraits of royal and aristocratic personages in Edinburgh between the years 1846–55, his work was little known in Scotland. The stipple of the miniature minimises the distinction of schools, and the work of northern artists who practised it across the border can hardly be said to have any bearing on native art, nor had the subject-pictures in oil of Thorburn's later years much affinity with Scottish painting.

Though scarcely coming within the sphere of the present work, mention may be made of the pencil drawings of John Brown—1752–89—of the better-known *Kay's Portraits*, and of Crombie's *Modern Athenians*, a series of tinted etchings of prominent personages in Edinburgh during the thirties and forties of last century. These, and the remarkable series of photographs known as *Hill's Calotypes*, mentioned in a previous chapter, have given Edinburgh a record of its leading citizens during three-quarters of a century, which is probably unique.

CHAPTER XVII

SIR J. NOEL PATON AND W. B. SCOTT

Joseph Noel Paton dissented from the traditions of the Scottish School in more than one direction. Hitherto, these had come from the older masters, through Raeburn and Wilkie, both having added a strongly individual note in the transmission. David Scott is an exception to the more or less of compliance with the lead thus given; and Paton is a second instance of a painter of mark who owes little to either of the founders of the school. The two have something in common; their delight in the world of fairy, sprite, and goblin, for example, but essentially they were of different temperament, Paton's lightsome and exuberant fancy and flowing line being as different as well could be from the austere and often somewhat archaic treatment of the same subjects by Scott. The younger artist was, no doubt, influenced by his senior, for such subjects as *Rachel weeping for her Children*, *Puck fleeing from the Dawn*, and *Silenus singing*, are reflected in the titles of Paton's earlier works, and he remained through life a steadfast exponent of Scott's art ideals, though he approached them in a different spirit and through a different technique. For twenty-five years he was a prolific exhibitor at the Scottish Academy, where his con-

tributions represented every phase of his talent; but after middle life sacred subjects occupied him almost exclusively, and these were seldom seen at the annual exhibitions. *Faith and Reason*, *Mors Janua Vitæ*, *Lux in Tenebris*, and others are well known through engravings; but the works with which Paton's name has been longest and most closely associated are in a lighter vein. *The Reconciliation of Oberon and Titania*, painted in 1847, conjointly with a larger picture, *Christ bearing the Cross*, was awarded a premium at a competition in connection with the decoration of the new Houses of Parliament.* *The Quarrel of Oberon and Titania* was exhibited in 1850. Both pictures display an extraordinary wealth of fancy, graceful drawing, and resourcefulness of composition, in the diminutive figures which swarm from foxglove bell and creeping convolvulus, or pose in every conceivable attitude on spider's web, vine leaf, and deadly fungus. The later picture is the finer of the two, its technique better suiting the subject. The other is less fairy-like by reason of its colder tone and more solid impasto. The same elaborate finish is seen, with an added realism, in *The Bludie Tryst*, 1859, the picture which most closely associates him with the Pre-Raphaelites. In allegory, *The Pursuit of Pleasure—a Vision of Human Life*, and in history, *Dawn—Luther at Erfurt*, represent the artist at his best. In the latter the young monk, haggard with vigil and fasting, reads eagerly the volume which has not yet brought the solution of his unrest. These, with *In Memoriam*, suggested by the tragic incidents of the Indian Mutiny, were the chief products of the years 1855–62. The history, legend, and ballad poetry of Scotland are

* A cartoon, *The Spirit of Religion*, had gained a like honour in 1845.

THE QUARREL OF OBERON AND TITANIA

By Sir Joseph Noël Paton, R.S.A.

represented in incidents from the lives of Wallace and Bruce, 1850; *Thomas the Rhymer and the Queen of Faërie*, 1851; and *The Dowie Dens of Yarrow*, 1862; whilst Dante, Spenser, Goethe, and the Arthurian poems furnish their quota of subjects. After 1870, as has been said, his work was less varied.

Sir Noel Paton's strength lies in his faculty of composition. Here one can say little of impastoes and scumblings, of transparencies or consistencies of paint. That mastery of the brush so conspicuous in many Scottish painters was not amongst his gifts, though many of his earlier works, and especially the careful studies made in connection with them, show a delicate and tender craft. It is only when one has seen those studies of foreground, of wild rose, poppy, and honeysuckle, that one can rightly understand this; as his mastery of design is truly appreciated only when one knows his work in pen and pencil, his modelled groups, and the drawings for similar groups and statuettes. These, and a frieze-like processional design illustrating "The Refusal of Charon" in Aytoun's "Lays of the Scottish Cavaliers and other poems," make one regret that Sir Noel had not oftener turned his attention to the sister art. Of his published designs those for the work just mentioned, and for "The Ancient Mariner" are best known.

Paton's art is interesting from another point of view. Holman Hunt, in his recently issued volumes on Pre-Raphaelitism, has said, "The Literature and Art of an age are ever inspired by a kindred spirit, the latter faithfully following the former."* Though, in a wider sense, the last clause might be contested, as regards certain

* Vol. i. p. 325.

phases of modern art, Mr. Hunt's words carry an undoubted truth. The influence of native literature on Scottish painting has more than once been referred to in the foregoing chapters, especially that exerted by Scott during the first half of the century. Towards its middle decades the more impassioned genius of Keats and Shelley and Tennyson made itself felt, and of the Scottish artists touched by this influence Noel Paton was by temperament the most completely in sympathy with it. At eighteen he was painting, like his elders, from Scott's romances—*Annot Lyle singing* and *The Fight between Bothwell and Balfour* were his first completed pictures—but from the date of his visit to London in 1843, there is no return to Sir Walter. His brush is thenceforth inspired by the later poets, or he harks back to literature more in sympathy with them than the breezy narrative of the Border minstrel. His relations with the mid-century movement were expressed not in painting and sculpture only. Twice, in "Poems by a Painter," 1861, and "Spindrift," 1867, the same trend of thought is felt.*

Some years the senior of Paton, and more closely associated with the English Pre-Raphaelites, William Bell Scott is less known in Scotland than in England. His easel pictures are comparatively few, and his reputation as a painter rests mainly on a series of mural paintings at Wallington Hall, the seat of the Trevelyans, illustrating the history of Northumberland, and another from "The King's Quhair," at Penkill Castle, Ayrshire. Of his oil paintings, a small canvas, *The Eve of the Deluge*, is in the Tate Gallery, and *The Border Widow* at Aberdeen. In

* Noel Paton was appointed Queen's Limner for Scotland in 1866, and in the following year he received the honour of Knighthood.

the former a company of luxurious scoffers, seated in the shady colonnade of an Assyrian palace, mock at the Ark builders on the plain below, whilst an ominous cloud takes form on the horizon. The treatment shows considerable originality, but neither here nor in the Aberdeen picture is the technique equal to the conception. The latter has all the excessive detail, with something of the impassioned feeling of the school to which it belongs, but in the feebly stippled flesh and wiry hair, as well as in the want of cohesion of the landscape elements, the painter's hand has failed adequately to interpret his intention. Scott is best known through his association with Rossetti, and through various literary works in prose and verse.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE YOUNG MEN OF THE FORTIES

By the middle of the century Edinburgh had been a recognised art centre for more than a generation. At first, its artistic had been rather overshadowed by its literary fame, but the pencil was gaining on the pen. The presiding genius of the place had long gone to his rest, and his monument, designed and carried out by local artists, had provided a new attraction for its main thoroughfare. Of the talented men of letters who had been his contemporaries, those who remained were in the sere and yellow leaf, and their successors, Aytoun, Hugh Miller, and "Delta," were hardly of the same calibre. But never, perhaps, has the city been richer in the literary and scientific culture that the presence of a great University and the headquarters of Church and Law assure. Around Dr. Chalmers, Sir William Hamilton, and Sir David Brewster, representing theology, philosophy, and science, there clustered others scarcely less distinguished in their several spheres, and these, with the steadily increasing artistic element, formed a society such as could be matched nowhere in Britain outside of London. And Edinburgh had not yet extended its limits so far as to prevent the easy association of its citizens. The institution of a new Æsthetic Club is just what might have been expected, and it is not

surprising to find such a society launched towards the close of 1851. Its chief object was the time-honoured one of "elucidating the principles of Beauty and reducing them to a science." Some three years earlier, a club which bears more directly on the present subject had been formed by half a dozen young painters, under the title of "The Smashers." The original members were John Ballantyne, William Crawford, William Fettes Douglas, John Faed, Thomas Faed, and James Archer. Fifteen years later, when the majority of the members had made a name for themselves across the border, the club was reconstituted in London under the less aggressive designation "The Auld Lang Syne," and the names of Erskine Nicol, John Stirling, and Andrew Maclure were added to the roll. Crawford and Douglas put in an appearance on their occasional visits to London.

Edinburgh has been *par excellence* a city of clubs, and, as has been seen, the artistic fraternity had not been shy of them. But it is significant of the change time had wrought in social habits that such societies no longer met in places of public entertainment. Not in Libberton's Wynd or Anchor Close did the staid professors, scientists, and litterateurs, discuss the principles of Beauty, as their predecessors had done at the "Dilettanti," and even the more Bohemian "Smashers" had no "Doway College" for rendezvous. The meetings of both were held at the residences of the members in turn. The "Esthetic" concerns us little, but the other is interesting as the first of a succession of sketching-clubs which have since existed in the northern capital. A subject was given out, and an hour or two devoted to work before passing to what the records call "the serious business of the evening." Very

lively meetings they were, and the fully extended minutes give a delightful glimpse of the art life of those days, and the theories discussed in jest or earnest by the members. The sketches made were mostly in washed Indian ink or sepia, and many of them forecast the more mature work of their authors.

Amongst these young painters William Fettes Douglas takes a leading position. He is less widely known than some of them, only because he remained in Scotland ; but, ultimately, it is a man's work, not the *locale* in which it is produced, that determines his standing. Like Drummond, with whom he had many tastes in common, Douglas was a typical product of the Scottish capital, and though he dallied with the wider field on more than one occasion, it can be gathered from various entries in the minutes of "The Auld Lang Syne" that a London career never had much attraction for him.

He had begun by exhibiting several portraits in 1845, but his true bent soon asserted itself, and during the next few years his future *métier* is forecast in its main lines of historic and romantic incident, subjects from poetry and fancy, those founded on his antiquarian and collecting instincts, and, most characteristic of all, from that borderland of the real and the supernatural which had such a fascination for him all through life. In every direction he shows a marked individuality. Incidents gleaned from chronicles and annals are preferred to the more stately pageants of history, mediæval lore and "Hudibras" to Shakespeare and more recent romance. Subjects like *The Tempter* and *The Friend's Return from beyond the Grave* are more suitable for literary than for pictorial treatment, but they help to show the versatility of the painter's talent.

Douglas's technique differs from that of his Scottish contemporaries as his temperament and conceptions differ. There is a minimum of that play of the brush, and of the varying consistencies of paint in which they mostly delight; yet his method is based on the same processes, with certain aspects of them—those which tempt the colourist to neglect other qualities—kept well in hand. It has all the native deftness and address; no Fleming or Dutchman had a hand more agile than that which has given us the nicely discriminated textures of parchment and tapestry, the frayed leather of bookbindings, and the miracles of carved ivory and chased metal work of Douglas's still life. And few had a keener perception of certain aspects of character, or could render them with such unerring precision in the physiognomy of conspirator, astrologer, or fanatic. The necessities of his subjects, and his original treatment of them developed, so to speak, a method which cost him some of the qualities he seemed at first to possess. A small head of Alexander Fraser,* painted in 1850, shows the full impasto, the luminous shadow, and the fine fusion one expects from a young painter influenced by Duncan and the Lauders. In more important works of the two following years—*Don Quixote reading the Romances*† and *The Bibliomaniac*‡—there is still the fuller brush and material of the earlier portrait, and his handling as yet lacks the precision which became so marked a characteristic. A few years later in *Oldbuck and Lovel*§ and *Hudibras and Ralph visiting the Astrologer*‖ all is

* In the possession of the Royal Scottish Academy.

† In the possession of T. S. Roberts, Esq., Drygrange.

‡ In Kelvingrove Museum, Glasgow.

§ In the possession of Mrs. J. R. Findlay, Edinburgh.

‖ In the possession of J. Irvine Smith, Esq., Edinburgh.

changed: the artist addresses us in a technique which lends itself peculiarly to his manner of conceiving a class of subjects of which these are representative. In the first-named, the Antiquary shows Lovel the treasures of Monkbarns. The place is cumbered with quartos, folios, and parchments, strewn about the floor or piled on tables and on a long settle, in company with wood-carvings, porcelain vases, and other articles of *vertu*. In the midst, the laird, with a precious volume in one hand, propounds some learned theory, his beaming countenance contrasting with the half-amused, half-bored expression of his guest, who leans back in his chair with patient submission. In the subject from "Hudibras" Douglas reaches a still higher level. In a low-roofed apartment, to which window and open door admit a flood of light, Sidrophel prepares to receive the anxious inquirers. Seated at a table strewn with loose documents, his figure tells dark against the light cast on them by the window in front of him. Eye-glasses in hand, he turns for a moment to consult with Whackum who, drawing aside a fold of tapestry, thrusts a cadaverous visage into the room at his master's call. Hudibras and Ralph are about to mount the door-steps, their strongly contrasted types having for background a landscape of river and meadow under a soft summer sky. Here colour-scheme and lighting show more variety than in the scene from the "Antiquary," but in both pictures the artist's changed technique is manifest. There is a lighter and more equal impasto, colour and chiaroscuro are no longer the only, or even the chief, objectives, as with most of his countrymen. The reds and greys of the flesh are often of unpleasant quality, but the drawing and contour of things, down to the most delicate accent which makes for

THE SPELL

By Sir William Fettes Douglas, *P.R.S.A.*

IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF SCOTLAND

THE CONSPIRATORS; TREASON VERSUS TREACHERY

character—be it in carved oak, dog-eared vellum, or in human form or feature—are sought after, to the detriment, perhaps, of other qualities, but with an ardour, a keenness of vision, and a skill of hand, which go far to compensate for their loss. He is not insensible to the influence of a well-conceived chiaroscuro, but it is an open question whether Douglas is not seen to most advantage where the arabesque and design count for more, and the light and shade for less, as in *The Spell*,* *The Whisper*, *The Ruby Ring*,† and *An Eastern Merchant*. In these, where a something of Holbein is grafted on the traditional methods, the artist's personality seems to have fuller play.

Dante arranging his Friends in the Inferno,‡ *Hudibras and the Lawyer*,§ and *The Conspirators—Treason versus Treachery*, of the years 1862, 1864, and 1867, show Douglas's further development in different departments. In the first, the austere Florentine, pen and scroll in hand, contemplates a series of concentric circles traced on the floor, before fixing the fate of his friends, whose portraits lean against the walls of the apartment. His red-robed figure tells dark against a white wall, pierced with a window of double lights. Behind him is a table with patterned cover, and beyond a tapestry hanging. A few books and manuscripts scattered on the floor, and a crucifix on the wall, complete an arrangement of appropriate severity of design and sobriety of colour. In the two later works, where the portrayal of the passions and the meannesses of humanity is the leading motive, the artist adopts a rather fuller

* In the National Gallery of Scotland.

† In the possession of Arthur Sanderson, Esq., Edinburgh.

‡ In the possession of Mrs. Findlay, Edinburgh.

§ In the possession of W. Y. MacGregor, Esq., A.R.S.A.

material and a more natural lighting than in the pictures of some years earlier.

Where he touches domestic life, Douglas deals mostly with its lighter aspects and situations. A picture painted in 1873, *When the Sea gives up its Dead*,* is an exception. In a room overlooking the sea two girls are seen near a window of Gothic form, from which one of them looks, leaning an elbow on a cabinet beside her. She is in a light-coloured dress and holds a closed book by her side. Seated near, her companion, whose slight, black-robed figure is seen in profile, bends forward in deep grief, hiding her face in her hands. A sheet of music with the title of Jean Ingelow's song lies on the floor, suggesting that the poignancy of some like sorrow has been suddenly recalled. The light on the yellow hair, spread over the shoulders of the bent figure, illumines the sombre apartment, whilst under a leaden sky the cruel unresting waters stretch to the far horizon. The treatment is extremely simple. The dark and lighter dresses make a sober harmony with the neutral setting, whilst the dull reds of curtain and cushion, and the gleam of yellow hair, are repeated in the book and the brass-work of the cabinet. There is all the artist's daintiness of touch, and the shadowed hands and wrists of the grief-stricken girl are of finer quality than usual; but one hardly thinks of the technique, so affecting is the theme. For the picture goes beyond the sentiment of the song. No wail of Border ballad has a deeper pathos than this painted story of the sea.

From the first, landscape had an attraction for Douglas, and one can gather from the glimpses some of his figure pictures afford, a forecast of the work of his later

* In the possession of J. Irvine Smith, Esq., Edinburgh.

years. The vista of river and meadow seen through Sidrophel's open doorway, the weird outlook on moonlit sea and Druidic stones in *The Spell*, and many other examples, might be cited. In a little picture, *Her Grandmother's Gown*,* there is a narrow strip of street of quite Turneresque delicacy. Apart from such indications, the artist had shown his capacity in landscape during a residence at Prestonpans about 1860, but it was not till the exhibitions of 1875–6 that this was shown on an important scale in two quaintly conceived pictures, *Stonehaven from the Bervie Braes*, and *Early Morning—Herring Boats entering Stonehaven*. Both are upright and narrow in form, in both the view is from high ground, with the consequent high horizon, in the one case of distant country, in the other of sea. The huddled roofs of the fishing village form a foreground for both. The former, in which the eye skirts the curve of the bay and follows the course of a stream through an undulating distance, is the finer of the two. The greater space occupied in the other by the tiled and slated roofs is detrimental, the reds being crude in quality, and rather harshly opposed to the silvery breadths of sea and sky. But it was in water-colour, and during his latest years that Sir William's † sympathetic treatment of landscape showed to most advantage. From his summer quarters, by northern sea or inland moor or lake, he would return laden with sketches in which, if the range is more limited, the individuality is quite as marked as in his figure-pictures. The braes, which slope steeply to the shores of Angus and the Mearns, furnish some of his best themes. There he delights in the

* In the possession of J. Maclauchlan, Esq., Broughty Ferry.

† He was elected President of the Royal Scottish Academy in 1882.

quieter moods of nature, when, from some warm tinted field, the eye wanders over still waters to where the distance melts into the sky, or some long spit of land breaks down to the sea. Sometimes he depicts the level fields and red-roofed cottages of the East Neuk, or draws his subjects from the lake and woodland of Monteith or Lochmaben. He attempts no dramatic effects, and his colour-scheme is limited, but within his range, and through the same strong personality, keen perception, and agile hand, which made his figure-work so interesting, he has produced a series of landscapes which are also unique in their kind.

Towards the close of its third year, the Laureate of the "Smashers," after wishing success and prosperity to the club and its members, touches in a penultimate verse a more solemn note:

> "Oh, who of us will be the last
> Who shall sit all alone,
> Haunted with crowding memories
> Of the days that are long gone."

It fell to the singer himself to be the last link between the old and the new. It is to be regretted that, with his retentive memory and literary gift, Mr. Archer has not left some more general record of the art life of Edinburgh during his early days than can be gleaned from his minutes of the "Sketching" and "Æsthetic" Clubs. To listen to his eager discourse of those far-off times—of his grinding colours for Thomas Duncan; of the tall gentleman who one day came with Sir William Allan to the Sculpture Gallery where he was drawing, and who proved to be Wilkie; of De Quincey and others whose portraits he had painted—was a continual delight.

In 1842 James Archer made his *début* at the Scottish Academy with *The Child St. John in the Wilderness;* and for the next fifteen years, Scripture subjects mingle with those of fanciful or romantic interest, and a large admixture of portraits, many of which were in chalk. Twice *The Last Supper* occupies his brush, in 1849 and 1856. The latter seems to have been the more important work, and was preceded by a sketch in water-colour in which the composition is treated on the old lines, but with a personal note which saves it from being a mere repetition. A bust portrait of himself, and a *St. Geneviève* of this early period, already give a forecast of his style, in their more definite form and contour and reserved colour and handling, as distinguished from the work of his compeers. In *The Mistletoe Bough*, of 1852, Archer has gained much, but neither in the type chosen, nor in the painting of the head, are there the refinement and distinction which mark the work of his prime, from *Rosalind and Celia*, exhibited in 1854, to *The King over the Water*, of 1877. In the former, the two heroines are seen in confidential talk, against a curtained and tapestried background The darker, Celia, lays her hand on the breast of her more demure companion, and, with laughing eye, interrogates her as to some happy secret indicated in downcast look and conscious expression Alike in the piquant profile and arch smile of Celia, in the more regular features of Rosalind, and in the various draperies and accessories, Archer here expresses himself in a technique which differs, in respect of a certain restraint, from the more racy or incisive handling of Faed, Nicol, and Douglas.

In *Morte d'Arthur*, 1861, Archer attains his highest level, whether as regards sentiment or the means through which

it is embodied. To the writer it is a far off memory, and, though the charm of the picture remains, one cannot venture on any detailed description. It must suffice to say that the prostrate form of the dying king—his clear blue eye already fixed—the "weeping queens," and the phantom angel presenting "the holy vessell of the san greal," as well as the surroundings of landscape and darkling sea, were set forth in an impressive design and a workmanship which, while it had lost nothing of its sobriety, was everywhere more sensitive. At intervals the artist returned to the illustration of the Arthurian legend, as in *King Arthur in Quest of his Mystic Sword Excalibur*, and *The Parting of Arthur and Guinevere*. No subjects better suit his talent and temperament. In the last-named, the golden hair of the erring Queen was spread out like a great fleece about the feet of her reproachful yet forgiving lord.

About 1862 Archer made London his headquarters, residing for a year or two in Surrey before settling in the metropolis. Subjects of mixed landscape and figure interest were interspersed with those from history and romance during the next ten years. Later, his attention was turned mainly to portraiture and single figure subjects akin to it. These branches are finely represented by *The Three Sisters*, and *The King over the Water*. In the former, of two elder girls one is seated in front with a child sister on her knee, the other, leaning against a tree stem, exchanges words with the nearer, whose head, slightly lifted in response, is seen in profile. A park-like background with a glimpse of sky relieves the group. The scheme is of whites, yellows, and grey-greens, to which the brown feather and ribbon on the pendant hat of the standing girl, the black velvet bands both wear round the throat, and a note

THE KING OVER THE WATER
BY JAMES ARCHER, R.S.A.
THE PROPERTY OF LADY MACNEIL

or two of colour, give accent and variety. These two heads are painted in the almost impalpable gradations of grey and faint carnations in keeping with the out of door effect, and the drawing and modelling of the features have all the grace and distinction in which Archer rarely fails. The white muslin dresses are broadly and freely handled, with due regard to form and with a fine precision of touch. The same qualities, in conjunction with a fuller body in the flesh painting and a stronger colour-scheme, are found in *The King over the Water*, exhibited in 1877, where a fair Jacobite responds to the loyal toast in the manner understood by the followers of the white cockade. These two pictures represent Archer's work on the scale of life at its ablest. In his average portraiture of this nature, one feels often a thinness and hardness, as in the three-quarter lengths of *Sir Daniel Macnee* and *Professor Blackie*, where, though the character is well caught, there is a want of the virility necessary for life-size work. By temperament, indeed, he was a painter of pictures, or of figures where his technique with its personal note of refinement could be applied without the risk of getting diffuse and slack, as it often does on the larger scale. Archer, like Sir Noel Paton, was influenced by the contemporary movement in literature. The Arthurian myths, revived by Tennyson, ballad poetry, and the older romance, take the place of Scott, in his subject-pictures. But his technique was less affected by the practice of the Pre-Raphaelites.

Two of the most popular Scottish painters during the third quarter of the century were of the Galloway family of Faeds. John, the elder, had begun as a miniaturist some years before his better-known brother – who first exhibited in 1844 and it was not till 1850 that his

contributions in that *genre* were supplemented by subject-pictures. Meantime the younger brother's talent developed rapidly, and towards the middle of the century, it can be gathered from the number of works exhibited as private property that his reputation kept pace with it. Nor is it confined to Scotland. Liverpool and Manchester, and soon London collectors and dealers were in search of "Tom Faeds," with the result that in 1852, at the age of twenty-six, he had already sought the larger field, where his works for many years were increasingly popular. In the sphere of domestic *genre*, to which after that date he confined himself, he had a great success. His earlier works were of more varied character. Whilst his ultimate bent is discernible from the first, portraiture, history, and prose and poetic literature are represented. *Scott and his Literary Friends at Abbotsford*; *Caius Marius in Prison*; *Ravenswood and the Gravedigger*; are examples. The first, well known through his brother James's engraving, is a fine example of the traditional Scottish methods, though painted in a rather monotonous key. *Venus and Cupid* in the Teacher Collection, the People's Palace, Glasgow, a small *Portrait of Mrs. Brodie*,* and various sketches, both in colour and sepia, of his Edinburgh period, show an extraordinary command over his material for one still in his student years.

Keeping the Queen's Birthday, and *The First Letter from the Emigrants*, mark the beginning of more important subjects in the department with which his name is associated. In the latter, where a young man seated in the embrasure of a window reads aloud to the assembled family, a technique similar to that in the Abbotsford picture is

* In the possession of James MacKinlay, Esq., Edinburgh.

combined with the more pictorial treatment permitted, or almost necessitated, by one of those picturesque interiors to which Scottish *genre* painters owe so much. The single light, against which the reader tells dark, illumines strongly the nearer figures of the group who hang on his words, giving opportunity for the delineation of varied expressions, under an effect which lends itself to a simple and telling scheme. Two years later, in *Burns and Highland Mary*,* the conditions forbid any marked chiaroscuro, and it is the ease and completion of the modelling, and the simple rendering of the idyllic theme that fascinate. The passion of the young poet is expressed with fine reticence; but it is especially in the painting of the Highland girl, who is seen full face with eyelids modestly drooped under the ardent gaze of her lover, that Faed shows himself already a master of his craft. The fair complexion and rippling brown hair relieved against the sky, and the bare arms and breast, are given with a unity of surface, a tenderness of gradation, and a softness of touch which mark the accomplished artist.

Of the pictures painted during his earlier London period, many are widely known, *The First Break in the Family*, 1857; *Sunday in the Backwoods*, 1859; *From Dawn to Sunset*, 1861; *Baith Faither and Mither*, 1864; well represent the nature of the work to which his best years were devoted. With as yet no loss of technical skill, the sentiment in these and similar subjects is often too obviously displayed. In his critique of the 1862 International, Mr. Palgrave says concerning *The First Break* -which represents the rest of the family giving a send-off to their eldest hope -"Even the weather

* In the possession of Sir William Arrol.

sympathises in its way, and repeats by clever signs the varied feelings of the family ; here a gleam, and there a shadow, the rainbow on one hand and the shower on the other. All this is ingenious, but it seems rather after the manner of a tale for very young children, where the moral comes in at the end of every sentence." One must agree with the critic's strictures, but when he goes on to liken the technique to that of Frith, he is wide of the mark, for there is in Faed's work a mastery of the brush to which Frith can make no claim. The picture at the Tate Gallery, *Faults on Both Sides*, and especially the smaller replica or finished sketch of it at the Guildhall, is proof of this. The latter—some 8 × 5 in.—shows in the painting of the figures seated side by side, all the daintiness of a miniature combined with the freedom of a larger handling ; and here the humour of the situation justifies the plain setting forth of the strained relations. There is just a tendency in the accessories and setting of this delightful little canvas to that over pronouncement of colour which marks another class of the artist's pictures. These are often single figures, Highland or Irish girls, "got up" rather than clothed in their native garb, and with picturesque glimpses of loch and mountain as background. In his later works this tendency persists, and he adopts a larger scale which suits ill the nature of his subjects. The painter-like handling and keen accent are exchanged for a softer and somewhat woolly touch, till there is little but the titles to associate them with his early and earlier middle period.

The elder brother's efforts, after the middle fifties, were more and more directed to figure-painting, in which he deals mostly with the illustration of song and ballad, or

FAULTS ON BOTH SIDES

By Thomas Faed, R.A., *H.R.S.A.*

IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF BRITISH ART

of Scottish history and tradition. For a year or two, 1859–60, Biblical and Eastern subjects occupy his pencil, as indicated in the titles *Bedouin Exchanging a Young Slave for Armour; Scene in a Bazaar, Cairo; Boaz and Ruth. The Cruel Sister*, 1851; *The Raid of Ruthven*, 1856; and a small canvas, *The Death of Burd Helen*, now in the Kelvingrove Museum, are examples from Scottish history and ballad literature, whilst in *The Cotter's Saturday Night* and *The Wappenschaw* he comes nearer the *genre* and character-painting of his brother. In all these the result of his practice as a miniature-painter is felt in the elaborate finish, the smooth surface, and a harder, less sympathetic brushwork. His diploma picture, *Annie's Tryst*, by which John Faed is most widely known, gives a less favourable impression of his faculty than some of the other works referred to. *Burd Helen* has much of the intensity of the "woful ballad" it illustrates, and both in *Boaz and Ruth* and *The Wappenschaw* there is fine character-painting. The latter, a large picture, with many figures engaged at target practice, before the advent of the modern rifle had reduced it to a science, furnished a fine field for variety of gesture and expression, of which the artist has taken full advantage.

It is not a little strange that the analogue, in the painter's craft, of Lever and Lover should have been found on the shores of the Firth of Forth. It may be that Erskine Nicol's interpretations deal with the surface of Irish life, that they embody only its humorous and picturesque aspects; they pretend to no more, but within their sphere, both as character-studies, and from a technical point of view, they give their painter a unique place in the Scottish school. A chance appointment as art master

in Dublin during the later forties led to this unexpected development in the young Scottish landscape-painter. In 1850 he exhibited at the Royal Scottish Academy *An Irish Peasant Girl:* a year or two later, by which time he had returned to Edinburgh, Irish subjects practically monopolise his brush. *Paddy's Toilet; The Onconveniency of Single Life*; *A Word or Two on the Rint; The Pursuit of Knowledge under Difficulties; Cushla Machree; Hould Me or I'll Fight!!!;* indicate the nature of work which, during the years immediately succeeding, brought Nicol a well-earned recognition. Those canvases were mostly of small dimensions, and though they want the finer artistry of the younger Faed's contemporary work, they were executed in a technique which well expressed the more marked characteristics and facial expression of his subjects. Nicol's brush has seldom to do with the delineation of beauty; the subtle transitions and suavity of handling that give charm to Highland Mary in Faed's picture referred to above, were unnecessary for the farcical and humorous incidents he depicts; but his adroit touch is singularly happy in its application to the sun-tanned faces of pronounced physiognomy, and the dilapidated costume of the happy-go-lucky sons of Erin he introduces us to. Nor is he altogether insensible to the charm of its daughters, as witness the flashing black eyes and comely features of his "Molly Brierleys" and "Cushla Machrees." The technique in his earliest Irish pictures recalls Lizars in its sharp contours and mosaic-like disposition of the various colours, though there is less dexterous fluency, a fuller brush, and a heavier material, than in *Reading the Will* and *A Scotch Wedding*. Towards the sixties his pictures show more of the Scottish manner; the broad shadows are thinner

and more umbery, and a well conceived light and shade veil the too pronounced divisions of his earlier colour-arrangements. This is exemplified in his diploma picture, *The Day after the Fair*, in *Molly Brierley*, and *The Wheedler*. In the first-named where Pat, in some dishabille, with bandaged brow, head thrown back, and hands clasped under one knee, ponders yesterday's results, the thinner painting is in a blacker and more monotonous key than usual. In the other two, a something of his earlier colour-schemes is combined with a finer chiaroscuro and a more skilful use of the umbers, though, like various Scottish artists before him, he inclines to carry a fascinating method to the verge of abuse.

Some of the pictures by which Nicol is best known were painted during the years immediately succeeding his removal to London. *Renewal of the Lease Refused; A Deputation; Paddy—His Mark*, are typical of these. Naturally, his methods are affected by contact with English art, though the considerable Scottish contingent by this time practising in London tended to counteract the southern influence. Still, the monochromatic schemes get modified, the umbery shadows contract, and before long, as with the younger Faed, the increased scale of his figures involves the adoption of a larger brush work, with like results. At a certain stage of their development most painters feel the ambition to enlarge the canvas and to use a broader manner of expressing themselves. There are various reasons for this. One begins to realise the shortness of life, and that the elaboration of complex subjects on the smaller scale takes too long a time, and hardly makes the impression that more broadly treated compositions do. The homely

proverb that "a good big one is better than a good little one" comes to their aid, and the more mundane consideration that size is, after all, an element in the standard of commercial value, is not without its weight. But the proverb does not always hold good, and there are walks of art in which the experiment is dangerous. This is especially the case with domestic *genre*, as none have better understood than those who first practised it—the little masters of Holland. *The Satin Gown* and *The Sick Lady* of the Rijks Museum, *The Visit*, *The Gallant Soldier*, and the *Dutch Interior* at the Louvre, are models of taste in this respect as well as masterpieces. In the few instances where Maas and Steen and Vermeer have adopted the larger scale it has not been with advantage, and few would desire to see the pictures just named otherwise than as their painters have rendered them. Certainly modern *genre* has gained nothing by increased extent of canvas. Wilkie's *First Ear-ring*, at the Tate Gallery, though the scale is still moderate, does not compare favourably with his earlier work, and the same is true of the later pictures of both Faed and Nicol. In more recent times this want of taste is increasingly apparent. Many instances will recur to those conversant with later developments of art both at home and abroad, where subjects quite suitable for a small panel are thus rendered uninteresting or positively objectionable. One of the charms of *genre*, that adroitness of touch in which its greatest masters have excelled, is altogether lost when the subject is presented on several square yards of canvas.

It were futile to speak in any detail of the humour of Nicol's work. Much of it is broad and farcical, Irish and more, one would say; but, at his best, it has the true flavour

of the born humourist. Not Leech himself has given us anything finer than some of the pictures already named, or such mirth-provoking conceptions as *Fair Exchange no Robbery*, in which an Irishman critically weighs the merits of his own damaged beaver against that of a scarecrow, before deciding on the exchange. In these, as with all the masters of *genre*, the dainty touch is one with the conception, and in proportion as this quality is lost, the rendering is less effective or gets vulgarised. A comparison of the work of Nicol's prime with that of his latest period bears out this contention.

Robert Gavin and Robert Herdman are the youngest of the figure-painters whose birth-dates fall within the twenties, and though Herdman was for a year or two a pupil of Robert Lauder, both are products of the forties rather than of the decade associated with that master's teaching. Gavin studied under Duncan. At first he seems to have had no particular bent, painting portraits, landscape, and figure-subjects with every variety of motive. Shakespeare and Scott, the sacred narrative, song and ballad, the peasant and pastoral life of his own country, come alike to him, till, when about forty, a visit to New Orleans deflects his artistic career. Mulatto, quadroon, and negro are now his models; nor does a return to Scotland bring back the old subjects, for, when his American sketches fail him, he seeks inspiration in Tangier, and only returns a few years before his death. Whilst there, and till he ceased to exhibit, his subjects were Moorish. In all its stages his work was of marked ability. It retains throughout the simple and direct methods of his student days, served by a capable hand and a keen intelligence. The productions of his first twenty years are seldom seen,

and he is known almost exclusively by his Moorish and American subjects. This is unfortunate, if one may judge from a portrait of a young lady, and a small pastoral of the earlier time, known to the writer. The latter, in which a barefooted child with blue sun-bonnet and skirt has fallen asleep reclined against a corn-stook, with a bunch of poppies pressed to her breast, gives a high idea of his capacity in the treatment of such themes; the landscape setting of shadowy foliage and half-cut cornfield carrying out finely the sentiment of the subject. It is difficult to get up much interest in the quadroons and "darkies" of Louisiana, or even in his African work, which he often treats poetically, sometimes adapting the Eastern life to such Biblical subjects as *The Prodigal Son* or *Rebekah giving Water to Abraham's Camels.* The artist's diploma picture at the Mound, *The Moorish Maiden's First Love*, in which a dark-skinned girl caresses the head of a white Arab charger, gives a good idea of the work of his later years. But for the portrayal of Spain or the neighbouring shores of the "dark continent," one desiderates something more of southern light and colour. The brush of a Phillip or a Delacroix is a *sine qua non*, and for this Gavin's powers were hardly adequate.

Herdman, the latest, is not the least interesting of the group; and though, in point of time, he forms a connecting link with a later school, he stands apart from Lauder's other pupils in remaining uninfluenced by the naturalistic movement, as also by a sojourn in Italy, now become unusual. The one may have had not a little to do with the other, for it was just when he was in Rome, or painting from his Italian studies, that the younger men were affected by something akin to Pre-Raphaelitism.

During the early fifties Herdman painted portraits, Scriptural pieces, and themes poetic and fanciful. Later, sacred subjects disappear, and Roman Pifferari, Highland reapers and fern-gatherers, with now and then an Orpheus or Hero, diversify his exhibited work. Portraits are not prominent, but in 1865 there appeared several—of the Wentworth family—which, being more than sustained in a group, *Dressing for a Charade*, of the following year, gave him a leading position in that branch. Thenceforth, sitters never fail. In female portraiture, full-lengths of *Mrs. Herdman* and *Mrs. Shand*, and a three-quarter length of *Mrs. Hamilton Buchanan*, dwell in one's recollection, whilst the half-length of his brother Academician, *Mr. Hill*, in the Academy's library, holds its own with the best achievements of the school. It says much for the industry of the artist that he found time in this flood-tide of commissions to paint various important subject-pictures, of which *After the Battle* and *A Conventicle Preacher brought before a Justice Court* are representative.

Herdman early adopted a manner from which he never swerved—broad, simple, direct—and which remained unaffected by the disconcerting influences which troubled most painters later on. It takes as little account of the analysis of the Pre-Raphaelite as of the mystery of *plein air* and values; and if he loses something thereby he is untroubled by the many perplexities of the later technique. But with what skill he uses his simple formulas. They have no *enveloppe*—to use a modern term—those Phœbes and Sibyllas, and the fern-gatherers and reapers may have something of the happy peasant of the drama. What of that? They are delightful all the same, with their vivid colour—gold and russet of corn sheaf or bracken—their

picturesque costume and dainty handling. His manner of generalising, it is true, is accompanied with a tendency to conform the physiognomy of sitter and model to certain well-marked types. But in his best work this is less felt. In *Dressing for a Charade*,* for example, one can scarcely recognise Herdman in the painting of the girl who adjusts some brooch or bow of her sister's costume. The contrasted dark and fair types of these two are carried out in their attire, the richly-laced black of the one, and the scarlet cloak of the other. In both heads the modelling is more carefully and closely wrought than usual, but there is in the painting of the fair complexion of the younger less of the mannerism one associates with Herdman. Again, some of the heads in *After the Battle*, that especially which is the centre of interest, show similar qualities. The features of the young man, now suffused with deathly pallor, are those of his class, the more thoughtful and better peasantry which gave strength to the Covenanting movement—for the Battle is of those times—and the painter's brush has adapted itself to the serious type and occasion; the modelling is more dwelt on and the method less evident. And if, in the heads of the old man and the mother, there is more of the personal manner, that also is seen at its best. There is a touch of melodrama in the abandon of grief to which the young wife gives way, which seems accented—so subtle is the connection between expression and technique—by the colour and treatment of the loose upper garment she wears. Otherwise, the arrangement, both of colour and light and shade, is sober, low toned, reticent. Nor in the execution—a modification of the traditional technique—is there the exaggeration of trans-

* In the possession of the Misses Fraser, Edinburgh.

parencies and umbers with which Scottish painters are often chargeable.

Various others are more or less associated with this time. Macbeth, a contemporary of those just considered, and Barclay, some ten years older, continued the earlier tradition in portraiture, Ballantyne and Houston that of historic and romantic incident; R. T. Ross painted domestic *genre*, whilst William Crawford practised both portrait and figure-painting. Water-colour painting had not been conspicuous in Scotland, W. L. Leitch, an able exponent of the art, having removed early to London, but the interval betwixt "Grecian" Williams and Bough was not entirely barren, the slighter medium having been used by many of the leading painters in their sketches and studies. Houston and R. T. Ross, though their principal pictures were in oil, excelled in water-colour; the former supplementing his figure-painting by many landscape drawings. Ross's work was more in the direction of sketches and studies for the setting and foregrounds of his figure-subjects, especially of those which deal with the life of the fisher-folk of the East coast. Particularly brilliant many of these are, and with a fine sense of the qualities of the medium. One cannot but regret that his work in this direction was so restricted and is so little known to the public.

Of animal painters, till quite recent times, there have been few. Howe and Shiels, at the beginning of the century, are little more than names. Sheriff and Forbes, of somewhat later date, both died young. The latter was of great promise. A small version of an engraved picture, *Much between the Cup and the Lip*,* and a larger unfinished canvas,* where three terriers sniff about a box

* In the possession of Mrs. Simpson, Edinburgh.

or wooden trap in which they scent vermin, show, especially the latter, spirited action, combined with a free handling and telling chiaroscuro. Gourlay Steell is well known through his portraits of sportsmen, mostly in the pink, or otherwise associated with the hunting-field. These he varied with subject-pictures, in which Highland cattle are often a prominent feature. His large studies in tempera of stag or hound were particularly vigorous.

The leading painters treated of in this and the preceding chapter form an interesting link in the development of Scottish painting. They are little influenced by the art of Lauder, Dyce, and Scott, their immediate predecessors; except in the case of Sir Noël Paton, who shows himself a disciple of the last named on one side of his talent. Neither in scale nor treatment is there anything in the works of the others, of the heroic nature of those of Scott and Dyer; nor are they much affected by the sober and dignified colour-arrangements of Lauder. Less ambitious in their subjects than some of those who preceded them, and less brilliant as technicians than several of their immediate successors Douglas and his contemporaries carried to a high degree of excellence some of the most distinctive qualities of Scottish painting, especially that skill of craft which has been its heritage since the days of Wilkie.

CHAPTER XIX

LATER DEVELOPMENTS

As indicated in the preface, it is not intended here to enter on a critical consideration of recent Scottish painting. Apart from other reasons for this, there is one quite sufficient—its impossibility in a limited volume, without reducing it to little more than a catalogue. Advantage has, therefore, been taken of the new departure, dating from about 1858-63, to bring such review to a close. But, as Lauder's pupils, with whom the new era is associated, have been frequently mentioned, a few lines may be devoted to their place in the development of the school. A more impersonal glance at quite recent influences is also given.

In 1860 Robert Lauder had been for eight years master at the Trustees' Academy, and the results of his teaching, and of other influences, were beginning to appear. One of these latter, the naturalistic movement, was, no doubt, strengthened by the exhibition in Edinburgh of certain Pre-Raphaelite pictures which had made a great stir in the south. No fewer than eleven of Millais's works had appeared at the Scottish Academy since 1852, as had also *Burd Helen*, by Windus, and one or two other pictures of the same school. This cannot have been without effect on the band of eager lads—all inspired by their master's

love of colour—who were then making their *début*. Pre-Raphaelitism had already affected Dyce and Paton in certain of its aspects; but the keener search after colour and natural effect such pictures as *Ophelia* and *Autumn Leaves* would naturally inspire, is first recognised in Lauder's pupils. Their earliest work was akin to that of their immediate predecessors, but towards 1858-60 a change of technique is perceptible; the modelling is less direct, and a closer analysis of the true tones finds expression through broken colour, in the use of which they differ both from the Pre-Raphaelites and from each other. The pictures of the young Scotsmen have not the impassioned rendering of emotion and facial expression which distinguishes *The Return of the Dove to the Ark*, or *Claudio and Isabella*, nor all the strength and subtlety of the landscape setting of *Autumn Leaves* or *Sir Isumbras at the Ford;* but there are the same elaborate detail and fresh outlook on nature without the eccentricities of the southern movement. As time goes on their handling broadens, and the works of historic or romantic interest by Pettie and Orchardson have an artistry, and the rustic idylls and domestic genre of McTaggart and Cameron a joyous note hardly to be found in the pictures of their English contemporaries save, in the latter respect, those of Hook.

Soon many of Lauder's ablest pupils are settled in London, forming, with others who had preceded or who accompanied them, the contingent which, under the name of "The London Scottish," made northern painting a power in the Royal Academy. At home, Paul Chalmers's brilliant work in *genre*, portraiture, and landscape,

influenced latterly by Israels, gave him a leading place. In the south, whilst Orchardson, Pettie, Tom Graham, and the Burrs at once took a high position in figure-painting, Scottish landscape was represented by Peter Graham, McWhirter, Hunter, and Macallum. In Edinburgh, Cameron continued his renderings of the joy and pathos of peasant life; McTaggart developed a broader style in his pictures of sea and shore; Macdonald and Lockhart illustrated history and romance; whilst George Hay dealt mostly with the society of the eighteenth century, often illustrative of passages from Scott. In Glasgow, where the place of the earlier Western Academy was taken by the Glasgow Institute about 1863, the tradition of Milne Donald was carried on in the landscapes and marines of Docharty and Henderson. A west-country painter, Robert Carrick, is more than once very favourably mentioned by Ruskin in his Academy Notes. He seems to have been strongly influenced by Pre-Raphaelitism.

The later movement associated with the Grosvenor Gallery had little influence on Scottish artists, apart from calling attention to the decorative aspect of painting; but the contemporary art of Walker, Pinwell, and North had its analogue in the work of various Scottish painters whose student days fell in the later sixties, notably in the water-colours of George Manson.

A more potent influence made itself felt during the last quarter of the century. Jules Breton, in his autobiography, tells how in his Parisian student days—it was 1849—he made the acquaintance of a young painter, Eugène Gluck, who was "much preoccupied with certain *grandes localités*

de ton, without shadow, which he had remarked in old tapestries, in the work of certain Primitives, and even in that of Paul Veronese. He had observed also that, in the street, the lighting of things was of the same sort, simple and high-toned; and further, how favourable such lighting was *au jeu des valeurs*, which no intrusive accident could destroy, and also what style and charm this unity gives to the character of heads: and he—Gluck—first called this *plein air*." "It is from this period," he states in another paragraph, "that our pre-occupation with *plein air* applied to figures dates." "Yes!" he proceeds, "it was in the cold, hard lighting of this sombre studio that we dreamed of the glory of diffused light." *

Gluck, the pioneer of the *plein air* movement, is unknown to fame, but, during the decade 1850-60, the manner of seeing he so named was adopted by men of greater ability. As we have seen, Velasquez, and one or two of the little masters of Holland, show a perception of the same simple lighting. The difference is, that now there was formulated that theory of values which made it common property. It is quite simple, but, like many such principles, it had evaded general recognition; even those who had had the prevision, knew it rather by keenness of vision than as a law. In the evolution of art, it was the complement of the recognition of perspective. Aerial perspective had been taken note of almost as early as linear, but was only now placed on the same scientific basis. And, just as in the fifteenth century artists took delight in showing their knowledge of linear perspective, so now they gloried in "the values." But, as in them-

* "La Vie d'un Artiste," Jules Breton. Paris 1890, pp. 200, 201.

selves both belong to the sphere of science rather than of art, no great merit attaches to such knowledge. Nevertheless, both principles are invaluable to the art of painting; one has delivered it from a chaos which every one can now recognise, the other, besides freeing it from incoherences not yet so generally felt, opens up new spheres of activity. But no more than perspective could be a substitute for the *naïveté* of earlier painting, can the most learned use of values dispense with any true advance previous centuries have developed.

In every widening of the field of Art there has been a disposition to overstate the new at the expense of the old. This farthest reaching of modern movements did not escape the general law, and many eccentricities have found expression through the revised formulas necessary for the inclusion of the new domain. Apart from these, its first effect was too often a rather mechanical technique, in which colour quality—meaning by that all those delightful artifices by which the painter strives to render the infinity of nature's gradations—subtleties of drawing and modelling and finesse of hand, were little esteemed. It had another effect—the principle being easily acquired, painters multiplied exceedingly. All the world went to Paris to learn a method which assimilated all schools. Twenty years after Gluck stumbled, as one might say, on *plein air*, the technique of Continental painting was revolutionised. Paris was everywhere; the variety which had characterised the art of different peoples seemed doomed; America was flooded with the new method; even outlying Scotland and conservative England were feeling its influence. But, in course of time, the earlier and cruder stages of the move-

ment were left behind. Corot lifted the use of *tonalités* to a higher level, incorporating something of traditional, both in method and treatment, with his abstract and singularly personal art; whilst Israels in Holland, and Fortuny in Spain, showed that painting could not long be severed from national characteristics.

During the last two decades of the century, a band of students, mostly associated with Glasgow, brought the later phases of the new movement into Scottish art. At home, their style was regarded as foreign; for some years the division was marked, and there were the inevitable partisanships; but, before long, Paris and other Continental art centres recognised in the work of many of these young men a distinct national strain. Latterly the old and new tend to approximate. History repeats itself, here as in other directions. The most ardent advocate of national art cannot deny that recuperation and expansion must come from the free intercourse of schools. In sixteenth-century Flanders, Mabuse, Van Orley, and others brought from across the Alps influences which seemed at first fated to stifle indigenous art, but which, so far from that, led on to the crowning glory of the following century, when all that was best in native Flemish and imported Italian painting was united on the glowing canvases of Rubens and Vandyck. Instances might be multiplied, but it is unnecessary. Here, as there, and now, as then, the result depends on the grit of the nation itself, and the temperament of its painters. Writing some twenty years ago, Sir Walter Armstrong said that Scotland, in spite of many disadvantages, had one of the few original schools. Surely it is not too much to hope that this position will be retained,

and that out of the perplexities of new aims and methods, there will arise an art in which all the qualities which have distinguished the Scottish School of Painting in the past, shall be united with what of best the present or the future has to add. Thus only can the old be rightly conserved or the new attain its full fruition.

SCOTTISH PAINTERS

WITH DATES AND PLACES OF BIRTH STUDIED AND

The Letters S.A. mean Scottish Academician; A.S.A., Associate of the Scottish Academy, and A.R.A. indicate Royal Academician and Associate respectively. The prefix P. means The two or three living artists mentioned have not been included in this list.

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Aikman, William	9, 13–15	Forfarshire, 1682	London, 1731
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Allan, David	22–24	Alloa, 1744	Near Edinburgh, 1796
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Ballantyne, John, R.S.A.	355	Kelso, 1815	Wiltshire, 1897
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Bogle, John	323	West of Scotland	Exhibited in London 1769—92
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Faed, Thomas, R.A., H.R.S.A.	343–46	Kirkcudbrightshire, 1826	London, 1900

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AND DEATH, AND WHERE THEY PRACTISED.

R.S.A. and A.R.S.A. denote the same ranks after the Royal Charter had been conferred. R.A. President; H., honorary membership.

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* Bulloch considers the close of the later year most likely.

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